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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO LIBERAL JOURNALS AND THE INSTITUTIONS AND PERSONNEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION WAS STUDIED. "THE NATION" AND "NEW REPUBLIC" WERE SELECTED AS BEING INFLUENTIALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF INTELLECTUAL AMERICAN LIBERALISM DURING THE 20TH CENTURY. STANDARD TECHNIQUES OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH WERE EMPLOYED. RELEVANT SOURCES IN POLITICAL, SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND JOURNALISTIC HISTORY WERE EXAMINED. EDITORIALS, ARTICLES, BOOK REVIEWS, AND LETTERS IN THE TWO JOURNALS FROM 1914 TO 1941 WERE READ AND ANALYZED. INTERVIEWS WITH SEVERAL OF THE EDITORS AND WRITERS WERE ALSO CONDUCTED. THE CONCLUSIONS INDICATED THAT (1) THE JOURNALS SERVED AS A COMMON MEETING GROUND FOR POLITICAL LIBERALS AND PROGRESSIVE EDUCATORS, (2) THE LIBERAL CONSENSUS NOTED ON EDUCATION SEEMED TO BE MORE FIRMLY GROUNDED THAN THAT IN MOST OTHER AREAS OF THOUGHT, AND (3) THE EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL IN THE JOURNALS HAD AN IMPACT AT LEAST ON THE THINKING OF CERTAIN ARTICULATE LIBERALS. (RS)

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James M. Wallace

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LIBERAL JOURNALISM AND AMERICAN EDUCATION

1914-1941

JAMES M. WALLACE

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LIBERAL JOURNALISM AND AMERICAN EDUCATION: 1914-1941

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ABSTRACT

LIBERAL JOURNALISM AND AMERICAN EDUCATION
1914-1941

James M. Wallace

Purpose of the Study

Historical research has in recent years emphasized the close relationship existing between developments in education and those in the social, political, economic, and intellectual spheres. Studies such as Lawrence Cremin's The Transformation of the School and Rush Welter's Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America have demonstrated that changes in educational thought and practice cannot be effectively analyzed without close attention to the broad context in which such changes occur.

American periodicals constitute a major element in the context within which the schools operate. They help to create in the public mind a climate which partially determines the fate of educational innovation. Yet with few exceptions, historians have neglected to explore the interesting and significant area in which formal education and informally educative journalism meet and overlap.

It is not yet possible to study intensively and effectively the whole history of the relationship between American journalism and education. Much preliminary research remains to be done before such broad syntheses can be carried out. This study is intended to provide one facet of that preliminary research.

The specific purpose of this study has been to explore, for the period from 1914 to 1941, the relationship between two liberal journals - the Nation and the New Republic - and the institutions and personnel of formal education. The study begins in the year 1914 with the opening of World War I and the peak of the Progressive movement; it ends in 1941 with America's entry into World War II. Liberal journals were chosen as the focus of the study with the thought that such periodicals would be most closely affiliated with the progressive education movement which flourished during that period. The Nation and the New Republic were selected on the authority of numerous historians who have identified them as the most influential and representative spokesmen during this century for American intellectual liberalism.

Methodology and Materials

Standard techniques of historical research have been employed in this study. Relevant secondary sources in political, social, intellectual, educational, and journalistic history were consulted in defining the topic. Editorials, articles, book reviews, and letters in the liberal journals from 1914-1941 were read and analyzed in order to trace journal reaction to educational developments. The unpublished papers of several of the leading liberal journalists were examined. Interviews with several of the editors and writers were conducted.

Conclusions of the Study

The period covered by this research has been broken down into three segments: 1914-21, 1921-30, 1930-41. The major conclusion for the first period was that there was a clear difference in the educational outlook of the Wilsonian liberals of the pre-1918 Nation and the Rooseveltian liberals of the New Republic. (After 1918, the Nation, under Oswald Garrison Villard, moved closer to the position taken by the New Republic). The representatives of the older liberalism of the pre-1918 Nation were quite out of sympathy with progressive education, and tended to defend traditional curricula and methodology. The "new liberals" of the New Republic were vigorous proponents of progressive education, particularly of the reformist variety.

There were also rather clear distinctions between the two journals on the other topics included in this section: the efficiency movement in education, academic freedom, and education as an instrument of social change. In all cases, the post-1918 Nation, following its shift to a new, more collectivist liberalism, adopted policies much like those of the New Republic.

During the 1921-1930 period the two journals gave vigorous support to the workers' education movement. In doing so they hoped to strengthen an alliance between workers and intellectuals and thus to enhance the power of both groups. The journalists also hoped to direct workers' education away from short-term, parochial goals, and to inject into it some of their own reformist vision.

The 1920's were also the period when the child-centered variant of progressive education was at its height. Proponents of these new, freer, and more individually-oriented schools used the Nation and the New Republic in gaining publicity for their work. A few enthusiasts also expressed through the journals educational ideas which were at least superficially anti-intellectual. However, the editors themselves never gave explicit support to child-centered education or to its anti-intellectual excrescences. Their sympathies were still clearly with the reformist emphasis in progressive education and their hopes for reform still depended on increasing the rationality of the public through various types of education.

During the 1930's the *Nation* and the *New Republic* effectively analyzed the impact of the Depression on education. They supported the educational efforts of such agencies as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration, but objected to the elements of militarism and restricted intellectual inquiry which they saw in these programs. The journals supported the efforts of educators and students to advance their own interests through the American Federation of Teachers and various militant youth organizations. During the middle and late 1930's the weeklies supported a united front with the Communists in these organizations, but they abandoned this position following the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact. Throughout this decade the *Nation* and the *New Republic* gave more attention to the political activities of educators and students than to the internal, curricular questions of education.

There are certain general conclusions which derive from an overall view of the entire period covered by the study. First, it appears that the journals served as a common meeting ground for political liberals and for progressive educators. Through the pages of the *Nation* and the *New Republic* educators sought to build support for their efforts among an influential group of liberal intellectuals. The journals also helped provide educators with a realistic analysis of the social and political context within which their work was undertaken.

Secondly, this study reinforces the view of Rush Welter and others that education constitutes a fundamental part of the political philosophy of thoughtful Americans. The research also suggests that the liberals represented in this study fluctuated less in their educational views than in their political and social programs. The liberal consensus on education would seem to be more firmly grounded than that in most other areas of thought.

Thirdly, the study provides considerable evidence that the educational material in the journals had an impact at least on the thinking of certain articulate liberals. Several case studies are given in which it is clear that individuals read and actively responded to educational statements carried by the journals.

Significance of the Study

One may specify two areas of possible significance for this research: historical and contemporary. This study may enable historians to see selected developments in American education, journalism, and liberalism from a somewhat new perspective. It may encourage further study of the reciprocal relationships between educational institutions and other forces in society.

For educators, this research provides a case study on both the values and the dangers of alliances with particular social and political groups. It may also allow educators to assess the historical justification for a policy of receptivity to social and educational criticism. Finally, it may help journalists to see the importance to education and educators of the commentary and analysis which they are in a position to provide.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Chapter One: Journalism and Education

In the fall of 1914, Randolph Bourne - soon to be known as one of America's leading young intellectuals - visited the high school in Bloomfield, New Jersey, from which he had graduated eleven years before. An intense, hunchbacked young man, he sat in the back of one of the classrooms and attentively watched the teacher and students.[1] Bourne was a sensitive, perceptive observer, and he was not favorably impressed by what he saw in the class. In his report on the visit, published in the first issue of the New Republic, he noted that many of the students seemed justifiably bored by class proceedings which seemed to have little relevance to any of their present or future needs. But through years of conditioning the pupils had developed "that good-humored tolerance which has to take the place of enthusiastic interest in our American school." They joined loyally with their teacher in "slowly putting the hour out of its agony."[2]

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[1] For information on Bourne, see the biography by Louis Filler, Randolph Bourne (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943).

Bourne tried to see what parallel this strange activity (or inactivity) might have in adult life. It was clearly unrelated to anything in the world of productive work - to processes in business, industry, or the professions. The closest analogue he could think of was the parliamentary procedure followed in a legislative body: no one spoke unless called on; the chairman-teacher recognized those who might wish to speak; passivity reigned. It was barely possible that the procedures in this class might find a counterpart in the future activities of some prospective legislator among the students. But this was exceedingly unlikely, and certainly did not justify the waste of time indulged in here.

Bourne was bothered also by the psychological assumptions on which the class seemed to be based. The students were expected to think without talking, as though these were two completely separable processes.[3] The classroom atmosphere was constraining, unstimulating, passive. Learning was not seen as a process in which students would actively use their minds to solve problems.

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[2] This, and the quotations immediately following, are from "In a Schoolroom," *New Republic*, 1 (11/7/14), 23-4. This article was reprinted in *The New Republic Book*, edited by the editors of the *New Republic* (New York: Republic Publishing Co., 1916), and in Randolph Bourne, *Education and Living* (New York: The Century Co., 1917).

Since large numbers of articles will be cited from both journals, it has seemed wise to substitute in the footnotes arabic for roman numerals in giving volume numbers; also to use the above abbreviated form for dates. In the interests of consistency, arabic numerals will be used for volume numbers of other journals and magazines cited as well. The journals are not consistent in including "The" in their titles. We have adopted Forcey's practice of referring to "the *New Republic*" and "the *Nation*," except where quoting those who handle the matter otherwise.

Bourne was conscious not only of the particular classroom situation, but also of the external economic pressures and influences upon the school: "Now I know all about the logic of the classroom, the economies of time, money, and management that have to be met. . . . Hand-educated children have had to go the way of hand-made buttons." But in an early critique of the "cult of efficiency" in education, Bourne declared that there was a fundamental difference between the masses of machinery brought together in a modern factory and the masses of children in school:[4]

> The difference is that, unlike cotton looms, massed children make a social group, and that the mind and personality can only be developed by the freely inter-stimulating play of minds in a group.

Bourne concluded his report to *New Republic* readers with what might be termed criticism by definition: "Call this thing that goes on in the modern schoolroom schooling, if you like. Only don't call it education."

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[3] Bourne had studied under John Dewey at Columbia University, and shared Dewey's antipathy to dualisms -- even those such as thinking and talking. Cf. Filler, p. 37.

[4] The phrase is from the title of Raymond Callahan's book, *The Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964; first published in 1962).

Thus in the first issue of the New Republic were identified some of the educational issues with which liberal journalism would be concerned during the next three decades:[5] the aims and functions of education, the psychological assumptions underlying the educative process, the role of the teacher, the place of efficiency in the schools, and the reciprocal impact of school and society upon one another.

I

The New Republic and the Nation are journals of small circulation, addressed primarily to liberal intellectuals. Both have had considerable influence on American thought and politics, and both have given extended and thoughtful attention to educational concerns.[6] But no intensive analysis has been made of the relationship between these journals and American education. This study will explore that relationship for the period between 1914 and 1941.

Historians like Charles Forcey, D. Joy Humes, Alan Grimes, and Michael Wreszin have studied the intellectual and political roles of the liberal journals, but have given only slight attention to their relationships with education.[7] Lawrence Cremin has used the liberal journals as sources, and has placed the progressive education movement in its political and social context, but has not explored the divergent educational expressions of the "old" and "new" liberalisms described by Forcey.[8]

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[5] A working definition of the troublesome term "liberal" will be provided below. See p. 6 ff.

[6] Evidence concerning the influence of these journals will be provided below.

Rush Welter has perhaps come closest to dealing directly with the material with which this study is concerned. He has analyzed the relationship of education to American political thought, and has considered the contributions which Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann - two of the founders of the *New Republic* - have made to the dialogue on this subject. But he has depended almost exclusively upon their books as sources, and has made but slight use of their more influential and extensive journalistic efforts.[9] He has also explored the relationships between educational and political thought in the nineteenth-century liberalism represented by the early *Nation*, but has not recorded the survival of much of that "old" liberal ideology (with its educational component) well into the twentieth century.[10]

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[7] Charles Forcey, *The Crossroads of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961); D. Joy Humes, *Oswald Garrison Villard, Liberal of the 1920's* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1960); Alan P. Grimes, *The Political Liberalism of the New York Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953); Michael Wreszin, *Oswald Garrison Villard: Pacifist at War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965). See also Richard H. Gentry, "Liberalism and the New Republic: 1914-1960" (Urbana: Ph. D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1960 - microfilm).

[8] Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961). For Forcey's discussion of the old and new liberalism, see *The Crossroads of Liberalism*, pp. 25-44 and *passim*.

[9] Rush Welter, *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962). Welter cites two of Croly's books and nine of Lippmann's. The only article by either man which he refers to is one which Croly wrote for the *Independent*. Cf. Welter, pp. 267-276; 379-80, and 427.

Other studies in educational history - notably those by Charles Foster, Claude Bowman, M. R. Sandifer, and Doyle Bortner - have drawn extensively on journalistic sources.[11] Some of these have utilized the *Nation* and the *New Republic* for certain periods, but none has studied in detail the relationship of liberal journalism and education. For the most part these studies have focused rather narrowly on strictly educational developments, and have given inadequate attention to the social, ideological, and political context in which these occurred.

It is hoped that this study, concentrating specifically on liberal journalism, and utilizing some of the insights of books such as Forcey's, may add useful information and interpretation to the educational history of this period. One may look upon this as an investigation into the relationships between two educative agencies, broadly conceived. On the one hand there is the institution of formal education at all levels; on the other, the informally educative force of the liberal journals. Such journals, unlike the popular mass periodicals, have throughout their history aimed more at enlightenment than at entertainment. Although they have devoted themselves primarily to political concerns, they have also sought to inform their readers about developments in literature, art, music, drama, and other areas of cultural and social life, including education.

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[10] Cf. Welter, pp. 194-5; 198; 203; 368-9.

[11] Charles R. Foster, *Editorial Treatment of Education in the American Press* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938); Claude Bowman, *The College Professor in America, 1890-1938* (Philadelphia, 1938); Sister Mary R. Sandifer, *American Lay Opinion of the Progressive School* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1943); Doyle M. Bortner, "A Study of Published Lay Opinion on Educational Programs and Problems" (Philadelphia: Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1950).

Obviously the *Nation* and the *New Republic* are not the only periodicals which could be utilized in a study of education and liberal journalism. One may justify primary dependence upon them here on three counts:

1) They have been the most influential of the liberal journals in the twentieth century.

2) They have had more consistent publishing histories than other such journals.

3) They have - with occasional falls from grace - represented the broad consensus of American intellectual liberalism.

One can hardly supply evidence for these three claims without first offering a definition and history of the term "liberalism." This is, of course, an emotionally-charged word, used to condemn or commend men and movements, depending on one's point of view. It is also a source of difficulty in that it is often used interchangeably with such terms as "progressive," "radical," and "reformer."[12]

Although the term "liberal" is often applied retrospectively to the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian periods of American history, it first received broad political use by the anti-Grant Liberal Republican Party in 1872.[13] The position taken by this assortment of Mugwumps, civil service reformers, and "clean government men," was clearly in the tradition of classical, bourgeois European liberalism. And at this early date, Edwin L. Godkin's New York Nation provided the scholarly commentary on events and the intellectual justification for political liberalism which was so important to these respectable reformers.[14]

But the constant friction of political reality gradually eroded the dogmas of classical liberalism. Social theorists like Lester Ward supported a positive role for the state in progress and reform. Political movements like that of the Populists challenged the doctrinaire attachment of liberals to the gospel of small government. Theodore Roosevelt as president demonstrated some of the social potential of an activist administration.

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[12] Arthur Mann, for example, in his essay, "The Progressive Tradition," uses the terms "progressive" and "liberal" interchangeably. This essay appears in The Reconstruction of American History, edited by John Higham (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962).

[13] J. Salwyn Schapiro traces the European background of liberalism and its history in America in Liberalism: Its Meaning and History (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1958). See especially chapter 6. Eric Goldman gives 1872 as the year in which the term first received general use in American politics, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage, 1956; first published in 1952 by Alfred Knopf), p. 20. This is also cited by Gentry, p. 5.

[14] See Grimes, chapters 2 and 3 for the post-Civil War role of the Nation.

Thus by 1912 a new liberalism, under the banner of the Progressive Party, had arisen to challenge both the stand-pat conservatism of the Republicans under Taft and the old liberalism of the Democrats. In the election of that year the two branches of liberalism, under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, had their clearest confrontation. In the heat of the struggle the partisans of Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Wilson's New Freedom may have overemphasized their differences rather than their considerable areas of agreement. But few at the time doubted that they were disputing over more than the means of controlling trusts; they felt themselves to be contending over fundamentally divergent philosophies of government.[15]

From the perspective of the present, Wilson achieved something of a Pyrrhic victory in 1912. The realities of power and the demands of the war forced Wilson, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has written, to "Nationalize the New Freedom." As victor,

---

[15] See William E. Leuchtenberg's introduction to Wilson's The New Freedom for a discussion of the areas of agreement and disagreement between Wilson's and Roosevelt's 1912 programs. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961). The New Freedom was first published in 1913.

Wilson found himself adopting and enacting much of the centralist program of the loser. He found it necessary - as Herbert Croly had proposed - to use Hamiltonian means for his Jeffersonian ends.[16]

In the election of 1912, the liberal journalists with whom we are concerned agreed on one thing: both the editors of the Nation and the men who were soon to found the New Republic rejected any thought of supporting the conservative Republicans under Taft. The Nation, edited by the classicist, Paul Elmer More, supported Wilson as the most consistent representative of nineteenth-century Jeffersonian liberalism. The New Republic group, including Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, Walter Weyl, and Willard Straight (the journal's financial "angel"), backed Roosevelt and his Progressive Party.[17]

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[16] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. describes the process of "Nationalizing the New Freedom" in chapter 5 of The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). Herbert Croly, who founded the New Republic in 1914, proposed "Hamiltonian means for Jeffersonian ends" in his influential book, The Promise of American Life, published in 1909. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1964 edition). Cushing Strout, in his introduction to this edition, notes that Roosevelt anticipated Croly in this position. Cf. p. vi.

When Wilson left office in 1921, the editors of the Nation declared that he had given the country a form of "modified Rooseveltism." Nation, 102 (3/2/21), 328.

[17] Grimes, pp. 47-8; Forcey, ch. 4. Sol Cohen refers to Straight as "that perturbed soul in search of a cause . . ." Cf. Progressives and Urban School Reform (New York: Teachers College, Columbia, 1964), 83. Straight and his wife were active in the Public Education Association of New York City. (Cohen, p. 83, 84, 89, 245, and passim).

For a fairly explicit definition of the differences between Croly and the Nation in 1910, see W. M. Daniels' review of Croly's The Promise of American Life, Nation, 90 (3/3/10), 209-211.

Thus one develops a picture of the distinction between the old and new liberalisms which is almost too neat: the nineteenth century vs. the twentieth; Jeffersonian individualism vs. Hamiltonian Nationalism; Wilson vs. Roosevelt; and - in journalism - the *Nation* vs. the emerging *New Republic*. But, however they may over-simplify the situation, these labels do serve to identify the divergent trends within the liberal movement.

The journals themselves have complicated the definitional problem considerably. The *New Republic*, during the period from 1914-1916, preferred to call itself "progressive." But when the editors began to shift to the support of Wilson, they took his "liberal" tag unto themselves, and dropped "progressive" as perhaps too reminiscent of their atrophied allegiance to Roosevelt.[18] The *Nation*, meanwhile, under the editorship of Harold Fuller (who succeeded More in 1914) managed to support both Wilson and the New Freedom policies which Wilson was realistically modifying and in some respects abandoning.

In early 1918, however, Fuller resigned, and Oswald Garrison Villard took over the active direction of the *Nation*. Villard abandoned the individualistic laissez-faire policies of his predecessor and soon made the journal into a vigorous advocate of the new liberalism.[19] It is evident, then, that as Forcey has pointed out, a shift of opinion did take place at the "crossroads of liberalism" in the Progressive era. Exponents of Jeffersonian liberalism like Wilson found it necessary to use the positive state to achieve their ends. And in journalism, the Nation took an analogous turn to the left and found itself occupying a position much like that of the New Republic.

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[18] Forcey, p. 255.

[19] Henry May, *The End of American Innocence* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964 - first published in 1959), p. 298. See also Oswald G. Villard, *Fighting Years* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939), ch. 19.

II

This historical exploration of liberalism and its two chief branches in the Progressive period permits a more systematic consideration of the three claims made above; that the Nation and the New Republic have been the most influential liberal journals since 1914, that they have had the most consistent publishing histories of any such periodicals, and that they have generally represented the broad consensus of American liberalism in this period.

In considering the influence of these journals, one must also justify the pairing of them in such an investigation. Students of journalism generally agree that the Nation and the New Republic should be considered jointly. Beulah Amidon wrote in 1940 that

> Most of us think and speak of them together - the Nation and the New Republic. Even to those who know them only by name, it seems natural to bracket the two weeklies, vehicles of liberal opinion, commentators on the current scene.

Miss Amidon noted that the two journals had a certain "togetherness" very early, and that after World War I they had been "among the first to voice the disillusionment and outrage of forward-looking Americans."[20] Forcey has written that at the time of the founding of the *New Republic*, the *Nation* was its "closest domestic model." James Wood refers to the *New Republic* as the "companion liberal magazine" of the *Nation*. Preston Slosson has recorded that the two journals joined forces to oppose the Versailles treaty.[21]

Clearly, there is considerable justification for joint consideration of the two magazines. But what of their influence? It is, of course, extremely difficult to measure the impact of any periodical upon the public mind. But historians, journalists, and others have testified that, in spite of their relatively small circulations, these two magazines have been among the most influential molders of American liberal thought. Morison and Commager have written that upon its founding, the *New Republic* "assumed at once a commanding position in directing the political, social, and economic thought of the country along liberal channels." Sidney Kaplan has described its editor, Herbert Croly, as "the most influential moderate-liberal thinker of his day." And Charles Forcey has recorded one cause of this influence - that the New Republic developed a reputation (not completely deserved) as an official spokesman first for Roosevelt, and then for Wilson.[22]

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[20] Beulah Amidon, "The *Nation* and the *New Republic*," *Survey Graphic*, 29 (January, 1940), 21, 26. This article was written in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Nation* and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *New Republic*.

[21] Forcey, p. 174; James P. Wood, *Magazines in the United States* (New York: Ronald Press, 1956 - first edition, 1949), p. 166; Preston Slosson, *The Great Crusade and After* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 289. Similar pairings of the two may be found in Cremin, p. 232; Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 364; and Frederick J. Hoffman, *The Twenties* (New York: Viking, 1955), p. 337.

The Nation, under Fuller's editorship (1914-1918) was clearly not the journalistic force which it had been during the post-Civil War period under Godkin. It had continued to represent the old bourgeois liberalism which Croly now called "a species of higher conservatism."[23] But among its readers were many of the teachers, professors, editors, ministers, and other opinion-makers of the day. And after Villard took over direction of the magazine in 1918, its circulation and influence both increased markedly.[24]

At the end of the 1930's, Thurman Arnold wrote: "I have read the New Republic and the Nation consistently . . . I can tell what my liberal colleagues are going to say tomorrow by reading articles in these two publications today." He added that "in this country periodical literature has been more important than books and there have been more new notions put across by these two publications than by any other two in the history of American letters."[25] Arnold's words apply with equal force to the entire period included in this study. That these journals have been influential, there can be little doubt. But what was the nature of that influence? It is unlikely that such journals converted many from conservatism to liberalism; few would read them unless they already had liberal leanings. An analogy to John Dewey may help to explain the situation. J. Allen Smith once wrote, "We were all Deweyites before we read Dewey." And Henry May has observed that "Dewey was immensely influential on people who basically agreed with him."[26] A similar pattern prevailed in the case of subscribers to these journals: because of their liberal interests they read the Nation and the New Republic. No doubt they enjoyed the confirmation and reinforcement of their ideas which they found there. But it is more than likely that the magazines also extended, guided, and shaped those ideas. Men of liberal persuasion read the journals as a means of exploring some of the implications of their general philosophies. The magazines helped them to transform their liberal attitudes into specific positions on various issues. Had the journals served as nothing more than a mirror for the ideas of their readers, they might not have survived - and perhaps would not have deserved to.

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[22] Samuel E. Morison and Henry S. Commager, The Growth of the American Republic, Vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949- third revised edition), p. 294; Sidney Kaplan, "Social Engineers as Saviors," Journal of the History of Ideas, 17 (June, 1956), 351; Forcey, pp. 265-66.

[23] Croly, The Promise, pp. 153-4. Also quoted in Gentry, p. 54.

[24] Forcey, p. 292; Humes, p. 12.

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[25] Quoted in Malcolm Cowley and Bernard Smith, editors, Books that Changed our Minds (New York: Doubleday, 1939), pp. 8-9. Also cited in Grimes, vi, footnote.

[26] Forcey, p. 21; May, p. 149.

The second reason given for dependence on the Nation and the New Republic in this study is that these two weeklies have more consistent publishing histories than similar magazines. The Nation has now appeared each week for over one hundred years, and the New Republic for over fifty. But during the half-century since 1914 a number of other left-of-center periodicals have come and gone. The Progressive magazine is one of the few of similar antiquity. It was published from 1909 to 1929 as La Follette's Magazine and later revived under its present name. Unlike the Nation and the New Republic, however, it is a monthly. It has never achieved either the circulation or influence of the other two journals.

Another leftist magazine, the Masses, has had occasional periods of importance during its tortuously complicated history. It first appeared in 1911 as a vigorous exponent of pacifism and socialism. It expired in 1917, was revived as Liberator in 1918, and was taken over by the Communist Party in 1924. It underwent a second rebirth in 1926 as the New Masses and a third in 1948 as Masses and Mainstream.[27]

During part of the period under study here, the Seven Arts had a considerable impact on the more esthetically-oriented young radicals. Although it was published only during 1916 and 1917, its editors - including Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks - made it a powerful voice among intellectuals.

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[27] Peterson, pp. 355, 369-71; May, p. 317.

During this period the Dial also carried articles by Bourne, Thorstein Veblen, and other advanced thinkers.[28]

Other leftist journals have also appeared during the past half-century. The New Leader, a tabloid founded in 1924, was for some years a spokesman for democratic Socialism. It became a magazine in 1950, and is today a tough-minded exponent of anti-Communist radicalism. Although it resembles the Nation and the New Republic in format and general philosophy, it has not attained the influence of the older journals.[29]

Amidst all the journalistic confusion described above, the Nation and the New Republic have continued on their relatively consistent courses, undergoing normal changes in their ownership and staffs, making occasional shifts in editorial policy, but maintaining throughout a degree of continuity not evident in the history of other liberal journals.[30]

The third claim made for these journals is that they have represented, for the most part, the broad consensus of American intellectual liberalism. Although they have changed their positions at various times - from isolationism to internationalism, from pacifism to interventionism, from sympathy with Communism to moderate anti-Communism - they have not strayed from the rather wide boundaries of the liberal reservation. Their general stance might be described as non-doctrinaire pragmatic liberalism. Such a position excludes Marxism and other brands of ideological radicalism as represented by the *New Masses*. It excludes the non-reformist iconoclasm of the early *American Mercury* variety. And it obviously excludes the stand-pattism of popular news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*.

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[28] May, pp. 322-8; 103, 297, 392; Forcey, p. 283.

[29] Peterson, p. 376.

[30] The Nation and the New Republic are the only liberal journals which have consistently been listed in the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature.

The very survival of the *New Republic* and the *Nation* over an extended period may be taken as evidence that they have managed to express (and probably to mold) some of the underlying beliefs of American liberalism. They have avoided becoming irrevocably committed to particular liberal programs or leaders, although the *New Republic* has had close calls with Roosevelt, Wilson, and Henry Wallace.[31]

Gentry, in his study of the *New Republic*, writes that the word "'liberal' is fairly well understood today to identify a person who in some way wishes to use the powers of the government to aid or guarantee the welfare of the public, while holding to the older concern for the civil rights of the individual."[32] We may accept this as a working definition of the new liberalism represented since 1914 by the *New Republic* and since 1918 by the *Nation*. This is a narrow enough definition to exclude conservatism and doctrinaire radicalism, and yet broad enough to leave room for the continual arguments which the liberals enjoy carrying on among themselves. This liberalism occupies, in short, what Lippmann has called the middle ground "between Manchester and Marx."[33]

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[31] Cf. Forcey, *passim*, for the *New Republic*'s relationships with Roosevelt. Cf. also "The First Forty Years," *New Republic*, 131 (November, 1954; Fortieth Anniversary Issue), 10.

[32] Gentry, p. vi.

III

This study encompasses nearly three decades, from 1914 through 1941 - a long enough period of time in which to trace various changes in the relationships between liberal journalism and American education. The starting date was set at 1914 primarily because in that year the *New Republic* began publication. It is convenient also in that during the same year Harold Fuller took over the direction of the *Nation* from Paul Elmer More.[34] In the world beyond journalism, 1914 saw in America the high water mark of the Progressive movement, and, in Europe, the outbreak of World War I. With America's entry into World War II and the start of Franklin Roosevelt's third administration, 1941 provides an appropriate end point for the study. That year was a momentous one for all Americans, not least for the educators and journalists with whom we shall be concerned.

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[33] Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy* (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 98. On the intellectual boundaries of liberalism, see also Arthur Mann's essay in Higham, *Reconstruction*, p. 164.

[34] The *New Republic* has been used from Volume I (1914) through Volume 105 (1941); the *Nation* from Volume 99 (1914) through Volume 153 (1941). 1914 is a standard historical breaking point. For example, Samuel Hays' book *The Response to Industrialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) ends with the year 1914; Slosson takes that year as the starting point for *The Great Crusade and After.*

The subject matter dealt with in this study varies, naturally, from decade to decade as trends within American society, liberalism, and education re-directed the attention of the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. During the 1914-1921 period the journals were particularly concerned with the efficiency movement in education, with academic freedom, and with the role of the schools in social reform. During the nineteen-twenties the editors and writers for the two weeklies gave particular attention to the workers' education movement, to child-centered progressive schools and the anti-intellectual strain within some of these schools, and to the defense of education against attacks from super-patriots, religious sectarians, and business interests. Then, during the nineteen-thirties, the *Nation* and the *New Republic* analyzed the effects of the depression on education, the federal response to the needs of youth (particularly as expressed in the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration), the growth of teacher unions, and the new leftist student movement.

In considering the various topics outlined above, we shall try to determine both elements of continuity and of change in the educational interests of the journal. We shall also point out as we proceed some of the ways in which journal personnel actively involved themselves in various educational activities and ventures. Finally, we shall analyze the general relationships between liberal journals and educational developments, with particular attention to the role assumed by the Nation and the New Republic as critics of American Education.

PART II: FROM FORMALISM TO REFORM: 1914-1921

Chapter Two: Liberalism, Old and New

The seven years from 1914 to 1921 were eventful ones for American liberals. Just as they saw, in 1914, their hopes for progress crest in a flurry of reformist legislation, they also saw their yearnings for peace dashed with the outbreak of war in Europe.[1] At the end of the period, after a war so destructive that even the "victors" lost, the faded hero Wilson was replaced as president by handsome, inarticulate, ineffectual Warren Harding.

Amidst these great events, the world of education went on about its business of training the young. But change was the order of the day in the world of the schools and colleges as well as in the world outside. Progressive education was gaining adherents, scientific management was beginning to penetrate school practices, academic freedoms were coming under severe attack, and reformers were calling on the schools as allies in their fight for justice and progress. And the Nation and the New Republic, while giving the bulk of their attention to international and domestic politics, commented extensively also on education as well as on literature, art, and other less political matters.

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[1] Carl N. Degler identifies 1914 as the peak year for the Progressive movement. Cf. Out of Our Past (New York: Harper, 1959), 366.

In analyzing the response of the liberal journals to educational developments during this period, one must be necessarily selective. It would be unwieldy and rather pointless to attempt to catalogue and classify journal reaction to all the specific educational "events" of these years. Instead, one major and three minor hypotheses are set forth. Evidence bearing on these theses throws considerable light on the overall relationship between liberal journalism and education.

I

The major hypothesis is that the "old" and "new" liberalisms in politics and economics each had its corollary in educational policy. When, in 1918, the Nation shifted from Fuller to Villard, and from nineteenth to twentieth-century liberalism, it modified its position on educational issues accordingly. The three subsidiary hypotheses all provide additional evidence for, and illustrations of, the above claim. However, each has an emphasis and a significance of its own as well:

1) Both the Nation and the New Republic were early and vigorous critics of the "cult of efficiency" in the schools. Both opposed - at first for somewhat different reasons - the permeation of business-oriented scientific management practices into educational concerns.

2) The liberal journals were - as one would expect - staunch defenders of academic freedom at all levels of the educational establishment. However, the pre-1918 Nation took a quite different stand from the New Republic and the post-1918 Nation on the means required for the defense of such freedoms.

3) Both the old and new liberalisms were reformist, and both made a place for education in their agenda for reform. But they differed significantly on the elements of a reformist program and on the kind of education required for the advancement of that program.

An important procedural point must be made before evidence can be provided for the above claims. Some studies in this field have been restricted to particular classes of periodical material, such as editorials or articles.[2] For the purposes of this study it has seemed preferable to draw on the entire range of material found in the journals - editorials, articles, book reviews, and correspondence. Book reviews are an especially fruitful source, for at least three reasons:

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[2] Foster's study of newspaper treatment of education draws only on editorials; Sandifer's work utilizes articles and editorials.

1) The journals devoted a higher percentage of their space to reviews than did magazines aimed at a broader, less intellectual readership.

2) More important, some of the most perceptive and thorough educational commentary is found in book reviews. The authors of these reviews often seemed to operate at a deeper intellectual level than was the case when they commented on particular educational events.

3) The utilization of book reviews makes it possible to obtain specific comparisons between the two journals. Editors and writers often chose to comment on quite different educational events and developments, but both were surprisingly consistent in reviewing major educational books.

An effort has also been made to utilize some of the incidental commentary on education which is found in articles and editorials on other matters. In such material one is sometimes able to see how the authors put education in a broad social context and what priority they assign to it.

This use of the complete range of material in the journals, however, raises an important question: can the general content of these magazines, as well as the editorials, be considered as reflecting the viewpoint of the editors? The answer clearly is yes. There is a surprising consistency within each of these journals. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that each [illegible] no attention [illegible] rather than [illegible] in favor of the editors' current version of liberalism. When Villard assumed direction of the Nation in 1918, for example, the "new" liberalism which he expressed through his editorials was also evident in the political slant of the articles and in the choice of book reviewers. In his memoirs, Villard recalled that period:

> I was captain and supercargo, purser and recruiting officer, and I had the complete satisfaction of molding my historic journal according to my exact wishes and beliefs.[3]

The New Republic followed a similar pattern. Croly consistently rejected articles - even of such "insiders" as Bourne and Walter Weyl - which clashed with what he saw as the magazine's general position. While one can find in the correspondence columns of these magazines a certain variety of opinion, the remaining material reflects a rather homogeneous liberalism. It is noteworthy that neither magazine ever thought it appropriate to issue the common disclaimer that the opinions expressed by writers represented in the pages did not necessarily represent the views of the editors. Writers who did not come close to representing those views were rarely granted space in the liberal journals.[4]

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[3] Villard, p. 349.

[4] Forcey, pp. 249-50; Century, p. 76. Throughout this study, terms such as "the editors" or "the journal" are used when the official policies of the magazine are presented. Although editorials were often written by other staff members, they received the imprimatur of Fuller, Villard, or Croly before publication. After Croly's death and Villard's resignation, the new editorial boards permitted a somewhat wider range of opinion within the weeklies.

II

The major hypothesis set forth in this section of the study is that the "old" and "new" liberalisms which co-existed in the late Progressive period each had its distinctive educational point of view. Or, to put the matter more broadly, each of the two branches which diverged at the "crossroads of liberalism" had a general philosophy which encompassed educational as well as political, social, and economic matters.

Lawrence Cremin has clearly demonstrated that in some respects the progressive education movement was the pedagogical equivalent of political progressivism. But his book, while emphasizing the "pluralistic, frequently contradictory character of progressive education itself, gives little emphasis to the deep splits within the broader progressive movement.[5] Cremin thus does not record the existence of a sizable body of political progressives who were clearly out of sympathy with the progressive trend in education. The *Nation*, from 1914-1918, represented just such a group.

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4 (con.)

For evidence of a fairly narrow editorial "line" in the journals, see the letter of June 13, 1916 from Fuller to Randolph Bourne. (Bourne Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University). Fuller rejected an article Bourne had submitted from Paris, giving as one reason that it did not "present the view of The Nation in these matters . . . ."

[5] Cremin, op. cit., 85-89. Except where specifically noted, comments such as this are not intended to be evaluative. Each of the authors cited has had his own particular interests and could not be expected to explore all the details which might appeal to another student of the subject.

One could solve this problem, of course, by defining progressivism or liberalism so as to exclude those for whom journals like the *Nation* were speaking. But such a move would be quite unsound. The *Nation* supported Wilson in both of his presidential campaigns; it consistently backed the administrative reforms so dear to the hearts of middle-class progressives; it saw itself as an organ of moderate, respectable reform. The progressive movement - like most political movements - was broad enough to include a rather wide range of opinion. It seems quite appropriate to identify Fuller's *Nation* as a spokesman for the right wing of progressivism and Croly's *New Republic* as a spokesman for the left.[6]

As was noted above, Rush Welter has analyzed the educational views of "old liberals" of the Godkin type and of "new liberals" like Croly and Lippmann. But he has not recorded the fact that much of the older liberalism, somewhat refurbished, was still expressing opinions on education and democracy during the Progressive era.[7] Thus there clearly is room for further research and interpretation in this area. A survey of articles, editorials, and reviews in the *Nation* and the *New Republic* suggests two propositions:

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[6] A convenient source on the variety within the progressive movement is Arthur Mann (ed.), *The Progressive Era: Liberal Renaissance or Liberal Failure?* (New York: Holt, 1963). J. J. Huthmacher's essay identifies Croly with the left-wing reform of the urban lower classes; the *Nation* fits easily into the more moderate middle-class progressivism of the urban gentry described by George Mowry. Cf. pp. 28 ff., 45.

[7] Welter, chapters 12 and 16.

1) Between 1914 and 1918, while Harold Fuller was editor, the Nation represented the "New Freedom" variety of Jeffersonian liberalism; at the same time its position on educational matters was less reformist, more traditional, and more individualistic than that of the New Republic.

2) After early 1918, when O. G. Villard moved the Nation politically to the left, it took a position on education similar to that held by the New Republic: more reformist, more sympathetic to the emerging "new education," more concerned about the social utility of education.

The editors of the New Republic were pragmatic liberals, who wanted to see education - along with other institutions - used as an agent of social reconstruction.[8] The pre-1918 Nation also saw itself as a reformist journal (this was perhaps its chief distinction from confessed conservatives of the period), but it saw reform largely in terms of restoration. It feared for the loss of traditional values in progressive education; it cast doubts upon the ability of "practical" education to preserve the higher things in life. Another clear difference between the two journals during this period was in the greater attention which the Nation gave to higher education. It saw the colleges as bastions for the defense of cultural values, and often tended to ignore the lower schools or to contemplate their activities or trends with misgivings.

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[8] Croly, Weyl, and Lippmann were "avowedly pragmatists, relativists in morals, and anti-Jeffersonian in their liberal persuasion." Forcey, p. 143.

The contrast between the two journals in this period is clearly evident in their reviews of two of Dewey's books — *Schools of Tomorrow* (written with his daughter Evelyn), published in 1915, and *Democracy and Education*, which appeared in 1916. The *New Republic*'s review of *Schools of Tomorrow* applauded Dewey's unashamed use of ideas and quotations from Rousseau. It declared that the Deweys had updated Rousseau's "old vision . . . of having each child unfold his or her powers and tastes, gripping and adjusting the world to him, and himself to the world." The book gave the reviewer the hope that such a vision might now be realized, not only in private schools, but — through such approaches as the Gary plan — in schools serving the broad public as well.[9]

The *Nation*'s review of *Schools of Tomorrow* was — characteristically — more lengthy, scholarly, and critical than that carried by the *New Republic*. While the reviewer did not completely reject the purposes of the new education described in the book, he entered several fundamental warnings about it:

1) He noted that education which emphasized practicality could easily "descend to the dead level of materialism."

3) He expressed the fear that too rapid educational

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[9] "Our Educational Prospect," unsigned review of John and Evelyn Dewey's *Schools of Tomorrow*, *New Republic*, 3 (6/26/15), 210-11. This review was probably written by either Randolph Bourne or Walter Lippmann, both of whom were at this period fervent admirers of Dewey. Bourne was also a vigorous proponent of the Gary Plan, which was favorably treated in the Deweys' book.

change might "endanger the cultural training which our high schools are giving."

3) He questioned the attempt in the Gary Schools, as described by the Deweys, to convince students of the utility of all subject matter:

> All education should be practical in the sense that it should fit into a useful scheme of the universe; but the use of some portions of it need not necessarily be felt by students until long after they have left school.

4) He admitted that aspects of the new education might be effective in the hands of imaginative teachers or of competent administrators like Wirt; but the average, more prosaic teacher would "deal almost exclusively in the material," and neglect the connection of the material and mental which Dewey proposed.[10]

The following year Democracy and Education, Dewey's educational magnum opus, appeared, and the two journals gave it treatment comparable to that of the earlier book.[11] Walter Lippmann's brief review in the New Republic was adulatory, and even included an unorthodox note of praise for Dewey's "tightly packed and organized" style. Lippmann was impressed by Dewey's sense of the social role of the school and by his grasp of the historical changes which had affected that role. He shared Dewey's antipathy to the traditional school

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[10] "The Public Schools," unsigned review of Schools of Tomorrow, by John and Evelyn Dewey, Nation, 101 (9/9/15), 326-7.

[11] Cremin's book includes brief citations from both reviews, but they are not compared nor is there any indication that they were expressions of divergent brands of liberalism. Cf. pp. 120n, 126.

> inherited from a society in which there was a sharp division of social classes, in which culture was the property of leisure and drudgery the fate of ordinary men, in which commands came from on high, that is, from God through the rich, in which obedience was a greater virtue than self-direction . . . and science had not yet come to break down exclusiveness and offer endless hope to mankind.

Lippmann welcomed *Democracy and Education* as a force in the creation of a new school for a new society: "It is a great book because it expresses more deeply and more comprehensively than any other that could be named the best hope of liberal men."[12]

The *Nation's* review of *Democracy and Education* was not unfriendly, but it lacked the enthusiastic, uncritical tone of Lippmann's. Among other things, the reviewer, Warner Fite, questioned Dewey's dialectical pattern of thought: "Perhaps it is wrong to expect a pragmatic philosopher to 'stand' anywhere. His business is rather to move." Fite noted Dewey's effort to balance the various dualisms with which he was working - the individual and society, culture and utility, discipline and interest - but felt that he tended to emphasize the second item in each pair. This, to Fite, was an outgrowth of the "'social' obsession which underlies all of Professor Dewey's thinking."[13]

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[12] Walter Lippmann, "The Hope of Democracy," (review of John Dewey's *Democracy and Education*), *New Republic*, 7 (7/1/16), 231.

[13] "Dewey's Philosophy of Education." (review by Warner Fite of *Democracy and Education*), *Nation*, 102 (5/4/16), 480-81. Fite, a philosophy professor at Princeton, is not listed in the *Nation* as reviewer. He, and a number of other authors, have been identified through an annotated set of the *Nation* in the New York Public Library. The names of authors and reviewers were written in by a bookkeeper so that they could be paid for their contributions. (In some cases the amount paid is also given). Most authors through 1917 can be identified also in *The Nation: Index of Titles and Contributors*, Daniel C. Haskell (New York: New York Public Library, 1951).

The contrast between the two reviews is clear. Lippmann accepted Dewey's social and educational program in full; it appealed to him as a reformer - as one eager to cast off the dead hand of the past and to build a more just and creative future. It appealed also to Lippmann's faith that science - as he had declared two years earlier in Drift and Mastery - might be the "modern communion" which would bind men together in their struggle for a better life.[14]

The Nation's reviewer, on the other hand, instead of welcoming Dewey as an ally, saw him partly as a potential threat. Dewey's philosophy questioned the emphasis of most existing education upon individualism, culture and discipline. It proposed to infuse into the schools a greater stress on social goals and activities and stressed student interest rather than the disciplinary value of content. In short, while Lippmann saw Dewey as the prophet of a better social order, the Nation's reviewer feared him as the leader of a serious assault upon established values. It is no exaggeration to say that Lippmann evaluated Dewey with the eyes of the future and the Nation with the eyes of the past.

XII

The January 31, 1918 issue of the Nation carried the announcement that Harold Fuller had resigned as editor, and that Oswald

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[14] Walter Lippmann, Drift and Mastery (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961 - first published in 1914), ch. 11.

Garrison Villard would now assume responsibility for the magazine. The shift from Fuller to Villard represented a move from the old to the new liberalism, although it was immediately instigated by the fact that Fuller had been outspokenly pro-Allied, while Villard insisted on maintaining a pacifist position concerning the European conflict.[15] The Nation's leftward shift helped attract many new readers, and was apparently welcome to some of the old subscribers as well. A "reader's-eye-view" of the change was given in a letter which the journal carried in early 1919:

> Nowadays on opening one's Nation each week one is conscious of an expectation which did not exist a few months ago . . .
>
> No longer do we read academic discussions on such dessicated subjects as the split infinitive in Shakespeare. A growing interest in and toleration of so-called radicalism has become obvious to the most casual reader, until we find open sympathy for, if not espousal of, advanced Socialism, Anarchism, and even Bolshevism - and the end is not yet.
>
> That that is happening to the Nation is evidently that which is transforming many of us as individuals. We are becoming aware that we are to live in a world of new conditions, one in which the old order not only changeth but may well disappear altogether.[16]

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[16] Letter from W. M. Stone, Nation, 108 (4/5/19), 533. The circulation of the Nation increased from 8,467 in 1918 to 38,087 in 1919. Figures from N. W. Ayer and Son, American Newspaper Annual and Directory (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer, 1919 and 1920). Some of the circulation increase doubtless must be ascribed to the Nation's vigorous opposition to the Versailles Treaty as well as to its increased liberalism. Cf. Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957), p. 67.

Another measure of the increased liberalism of the Nation is in the men who wrote for it. During the 1918-1921 period the following liberals were among the journal's writers and reviewers: J. S. Schapiro, George Soule, V. L. Parrington, Ernest Gruening, Heywood Broun, Freda Kirchwey, and John Dos Passos. Some, like Harold Laski and Robert M. Lovett, wrote for both the Nation and the New Republic.

The journal was not, of course, espousing anarchism and bolshevism, but it was - like the New Republic - promoting an advanced liberalism which showed no fear of collectivist measures.

The changed editorial policy encompassed education along with other domestic concerns. Writers and reviewers placed less emphasis on traditional cultural values and mental discipline and more on the social and reformist role of education. They became increasingly vigorous in their attack on business domination of schools and colleges. They spoke out for strong professional teachers' organizations. In short, they moved closer to the "new liberal" position already held by Dewey and his allies on the New Republic.

In fact, a more favorable attitude to Deweyan pragmatism was one of the more noticeable changes in the "new" Nation. Where the reviews of Dewey's earlier books have been somewhat suspicious and critical, the review of his Reconstruction in Philosophy which appeared in late 1920 was entirely positive. The fact that Boyd Bode, a pragmatist whose work and ideas, according to Cremin, "closely resembled the spirit and temper of Dewey's" was asked to review the book was itself indicative of the change in the Nation.[17]

Boyd saw the book as the "most comprehensive and enlightening pragmatic document that has yet appeared." He agreed with Dewey's claim that philosophy had historically been a conservative force and that science could help to liberate philosophy as it had other fields. While he did not allude to Dewey's few specific references to education in Reconstruction in Philosophy, the social implications of the book were clear from Bode's commentary. He saw pragmatism as a "tool or an instrument for the reorganization of experience, not an explication of a pre-existent reality."

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[17] Cremin, p. 221.

Boyd concluded with the statement that

> . . . the book is a masterpiece. It formulates and applies, with splendid insight, an outlook upon life that represents one of the potent social forces of the present time. It is in itself a reconstruction in philosophy, and it is a powerful plea to philosophy to forsake its sterile practices and become in a significant sense a guide of life.[18]

Articles and reviews of this nature indicated that Villard's Nation, as a spokesman of the new liberalism, was sympathetic with the pragmatic philosophy which underlay the new education.[19] It was equally sympathetic with educational experiments which grew out of that democratic, pragmatic point of view. In early 1918 preliminary plans for the New School for Social Research were released. A Nation editorial, written by H. R. Mussey, praised the founders for their vision of an educational institution based on freedom and creativity, which minimized administration, and which liberated students from rigid curricular boundaries. Mussey hoped that such an institution might fulfill a function not met by business-dominated universities, which "have difficulty providing the surroundings in which the frank discussion of existing social conditions with a view to their radical reconstruction, if necessary, can be easily carried on."[20]

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[18] Boyd H. Bode, "Reconstruction in Philosophy," (review of John Dewey's book by that title), Nation, 111 (12/8/20), 658-60. Dewey's few direct references to education may be found on pp. 125, 183-6, and 209. Reconstruction in Philosophy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 - enlarged edition). The first edition was published in 1920.

[19] James writes that Villard reflected "a basic characteristic of American liberalism - that of pragmatism, which requires that all social institutions be evaluated in terms of their practical consequences for democratic ideals." p. 103.

As plans for the New School were gradually formulated the Nation continued to applaud the proposal. An article by James Harvey Robinson, one of the founders of the school, described the new venture as a response to the problems of social reconstruction created or exposed by the war. Robinson hoped that the institution might help to bridge the yawning gulf which existed between theory and practice in the social sciences. In a Deweyan reconciliation of dualisms he declared that "all intelligent practice is based on theory, and all theories that are calculated to aid in reform are nothing but broad and critical ways of viewing practice."

The editors asked several leading educators to comment on the plans for the New School, and it is indicative of the journal's drift away from traditional standards that it had to be reminded by one of the commentators, Alexander Meiklejohn, that in the plans, "literature and philosophy, the appreciations and the values, and the intellectual presuppositions - are alike ignored." Meiklejohn, then president of Amherst College, was sympathetic to the basic purposes of the school, but feared that an institution which slighted the common core of culture could not effectively carry out its own reformist mission.[21]

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[20] "An Independent College of Political Science," editorial, Nation, 106 (5/11/18), 559-60. Mussey's authorship of this editorial has been established through the New York Public Library (hereafter N.Y.P.L.) edition of the Nation. Morton White describes the New School as "the shrine of academic liberalism in the twenties." Cf. Social Thought in America (Boston: Beacon Press, rev. ed., 1957), p. 193.

Further evidence on this question is given below in those sections of the paper dealing with efficiency, academic freedom, and reformism in education. But it should be clear at this point that the progressive movement had its right and left wings, represented in journalism by the pre-1919 Nation and by the New Republic; that there were clear and consistent differences in the educational policies of the two journals during that period; and that under a "new liberal" editor after 1918, the Nation adopted a position on education similar to that already taken by its fellow journal.

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[21] "A New Educational Venture," Nation, 107 (9/7/18), 264-7. Robinson's name is not given in the Nation, but is written into the N.Y.P.L. edition. One of the commentators, Francis Hand, wrote: "It is to be hoped that the freedom of the new school from any suspicion of capitalistic bias will win the confidence of labor."

Croly, Alvin Johnson, and Dorothy Straight were among those associated with the liberal journals who were instrumental in the founding of the New School. Some of the planning sessions were held at the New Republic offices. (Interview with Alvin Johnson, 11/17/65).

Chapter Three: Efficiency and Education

I

During the period under study the *Nation* and the *New Republic* were consistently hostile to the domination of the schools by business ideologies and values. The journals evidenced this hostility in a number of ways, including their positions on vocational education, but it can be explored most meaningfully in their attitudes toward the application of business efficiency to educational concerns.[1]

The relationships of these two journals to American business and its generally conservative outlook were complex, ambiguous, and changing. At the beginning of this period, in spite of their differences, both were organs of middle-class reform; neither sought an alliance with the proletariat against the rest of society. The founders of the *New Republic* - whose magazine was subsidized by Willard Straight, a representative of the Morgan interests - had in their books expressed an inordinate faith that enlightened businessmen might "civilize the whole class conflict."[2] Perhaps the images of men like Straight occupied too much of the foreground of their minds.

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[1] Raymond Callahan has considered this problem at length in *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*. Our purpose here is to explore the issue from the standpoint of the liberal journals and to stress more strongly than Callahan the fact that liberals - because of their partial alienation from the business ethos - were in a position to be peculiarly sensitive to the problems involved.

Yet in spite of their hope that businessmen might _become_ the agents of social transformation, the _New Republic_ editors were more than a bit suspicious of the existing influence of business. They lost no opportunity to denounce the conservative role of businessmen in the affairs of the nation, including the schools. As Forcey has pointed out, Croly, Weyl, and Lippmann as editors were soon putting their faith in industrial democracy rather than relying on businessmen as the agents of social change.[3]

Thus, almost from the beginning of its history, the _New Republic_ opposed business conservatism from the "left." The _Nation_'s early opposition to the business ideology, however, might be said to come neither from the left nor the right, but from "above." It requires no stretch of the historical imagination to see the pre-1918 _Nation_ in terms of Richard Hofstadter's "status revolution."[4] Under Harold Fuller (and Paul Elmer More before him) the _Nation_ looked down on the new business leadership and continually sniped at the shoddy values displayed by that leadership. The Nation, as Henry May has shown, was a representative of the "genteel tradition";[5] as such, it resisted the encroachment of philistine, super-practical "progress" in many areas of life, including education.

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[2] Walter Lippmann, _A Preface to Politics_. Quoted in Forcey, p. 112.

[3] For the changing views of the _New Republic_ group on businessmen and reform, see Forcey, pp. 112, 215, 164 ff.

[4] Hofstadter draws on Grimes' study in placing Godkin's _Nation_ in the "status revolution" framework. The _Nation_ of More and Fuller may be analyzed in the same terms. Cf. Richard Hofstadter, _The Age of Reform_ (New York: Vintage Books, 1960 - first published in 1955), pp. 142-3.

Both journals were thus suspicious of the "pecuniary interests," although on the basis of somewhat different outlooks. Their attitudes toward business were expressed in articles and editorials on a variety of subjects and were clearly evident in discussions of efficiency and education.

In the case of the New Republic there was a complicating factor. Croly, Weyl, and Lippmann came to their journalistic endeavors with considerable admiration for "raw" efficiency - for efficiency not tied to a conservative social program. Like many other progressives, they were interested in scientific government, scientific conservation, scientific labor relations and in other applications of science and efficiency practices.[6] The New Republic was thus in a position to support efficiency as a means, but to reject many of the conservative ends to which businessmen tried to apply it. The Nation also saw clearly that efficiency could not stand as a social goal, but it was also almost automatically suspicious of efficiency in itself. The whole efficiency package represented elements of a new industrial society which the Nation could not quite accept. The important point is that both journals - although approaching the problem from different directions - reached similar conclusions regarding efficiency practices in education.

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[5] May, pp. 132-6.

[6] Cf. May, 135; also Samuel P. Hays, Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 265, 270-71. This book - whose title is strikingly paralleled by Callahan's - deals with similar problems in a quite different field. The best and most comprehensive study of this movement, however, is Samuel Haber's Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). Chapter V, "Three Reformers of Reform," deals with Louis Brandeis, Herbert Croly, and Walter Lippmann, and their relationships with the efficiency movement. Villard, in 1911, was one of the founders of the Efficiency Society of New York. (Haber, p. 73n).

The New Republic's position on efficiency in education was the corollary of its policy on efficiency in industry. That policy was made clear in a 1916 editorial which reported on a meeting of the Taylor Society, and which concluded that "our greatest need in America today is a working agreement between democracy and science." The problem even entered political discussions, with Hughes in the 1916 campaign accusing the Democratic administration of gross inefficiency. Lippmann, however, stated his preference for Wilson, and declared that "efficiency will never be a popular cause in America until it is tied securely to radical liberalism."[7]

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[7] Editorial, "Democratic Control of Scientific Management," New Republic, 9 (12-23/16), 204-5; Walter Lippmann, "The Puzzle of Hughes," 8 (9/30/16), 210-13.

II

As was noted earlier, Randolph Bourne, in the very first article on education carried by the New Republic, criticized - albeit somewhat obliquely - the penetration of efficiency practices into the schools. He had struck a theme which he would continually express in his educational writings. In 1916 he put the matter in some perspective, separating efficient means from human goals:

> A school system whose object was little more than to abolish illiteracy and prepare the more fortunate for college was bound to fall an easy prey to the mechanical organizer. . . The machinery was developed before the moving ideals were worked out. . . It is so easy to forget that this tightening of the machinery is only in order that the product may be finer and richer . . . To institutionalize a social function is always the line of least resistance.[8]

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[8] Bourne, "Education as Living," New Republic, 8 (8/5/16), 10-12. This essay was reprinted in Education and Living and in War and the Intellectuals, ed. Carl Resek (New York: Harper, 1964). In this article Bourne made a point which is one of the themes of Callahan's book: that "there is a danger that we shall create capable administrators faster than we create imaginative educators." This was Bourne's fifty-ninth contribution to the New Republic in its twenty-one months of publication. (This data is from the bibliography of The World of Randolph Bourne, edited by Lillian Schlissel /New York: E. P. Dutton, 1965/, pp. 328-330). Croly had taken on Bourne as a regular, paid contributor before the New Republic was launched. In a letter of September 15, 1914 he wrote Bourne: "You will be exceedingly useful to the paper in case your writing can include a more or less systematic dealing with educational and religious topics. I agree absolutely with the slight indication in your letter of the point of view you would like to take both in education and religion . . ." (Letter in Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University).

But it is in Bourne's articles on the "Gary Plan" that one sees most clearly the "new liberal's" attitude towards efficiency and education. In 1915 Bourne wrote a series of five New Republic articles about William Wirt's educational innovations in Gary, Indiana. Bourne visited the Gary Schools, and was quite impressed by their democratic spirit, by the enthusiasm with which the students participated in the work, and by the numerous connections established between the life of the school and that of the community outside.

The Gary Schools had been cited as an example of the application of scientific management to education, but Bourne saw them in quite a different light.[9] He reported Wirt's belief that the public was unlikely to increase its investment in education and that the only hope for improvement was the more intensive use of educational resources. But Bourne declared that this change had been undertaken "with none of the spirit of the 'efficiency expert' or mechanical administrator." He could not agree with some critics that the Gary schools were the educational analogues of the new steel industry that was burgeoning in Gary. On the contrary,

> That these schools [Challenge] in their democratic organization and opportunity, their versatility and joy of initiative, most of the ideas and principles upon which enterprises like those of Judge Gary's have been founded.

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[9] Callahan notes that as early as 1911 and 1912, educational leaders like J. F. Bobbitt were citing the Gary schools in this way. Cf. pp. 130-134.

> is one of those ironical accidents
> which will happen.[10]

Bourne returned to this theme in his second article, declaring that "Mr. Wirt has been accused of 'business efficiency,' but this is scarcely the term for so artistically elegant a scheme of economy. . . . Such economy is creative; it enriches, not impoverishes."[11] In fact, one of the major themes of Bourne's articles was that the Gary schools had succeeded in freeing teachers and students from old lock-step mechanical educational procedures.

As Bourne observed later, these articles constituted a "mere impressionistic survey" of Wirt's educational innovations.[12] He seems to have spent most of his time visiting

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[10] Bourne, "Schools in Gary," New Republic, 2 (3/27/15), 198-9.

[11] Bourne, "Communities for Children," New Republic, 2 (4/3/15), 233-6. The other articles in the series were: "Really Public Schools," 2 (4/10/15), 259-61; "Apprentices to the Schools," 2 (4/24/15), 302-3; and "The Natural School," 2 (5/1/15), 326-8.

[12] Bourne, The Gary Schools (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), p. viii. Agnes De Lima, a progressive educator, educational writer, and close friend of Bourne's, feels that he wrote rather uncritically about the Gary schools. (Interview with author, 11/18/65). F. S. Hoyt, who handled the publishing details of The Gary Schools, continually warned Bourne against being "too eulogistic of Mr. Wirt." Hoyt also reminded Bourne that "the public composed of the teaching profession is considerably different from the "New Republic's" readers, and it seems to us that the articles will have to be considerably modified if not entirely rewritten from the educational point of view." (Letters from Hoyt to Bourne, 7/22/15; 6/3/15; cf. also letters of 9/27/15 and 10/5/15.) Bourne made a valiant effort to temper his fervor for the Gary schools. Just after completing the manuscript, he wrote to a friend, Elizabeth Sergeant: "The Gary work is a fearful thing. I tried to be official and descriptive and to quench all unqualified enthusiasm with the result that I am duller than the most cautious schoolman." (Letter of 9/23/15). All the above are in the Bourne papers at Columbia University.

[illegible]ooms and re[illegible] exploring the administrative intricacies of the system. Had he done so he might have seen more clearly, and warned against, the incipient tendencies towards conservative, business-oriented, economy-emphasizing efficiency which were to become the target of later liberal critics.

But the important point for our purpose is not, of course, whether Bourne was correct in his assertion that the Gary schools were free of negative efficiency practices. The significant thing to note is that Bourne in these articles expressed unremitting hostility to mechanical efficiency approaches to educational and human concerns. Part of his favorable response to the Gary Schools was based precisely on his belief that they were free of such life-destroying influences.[13]

John Dewey, in a 1918 review of Helen Marot's *Creative Industry*, added his authority to the conviction expressed by the editors, by Lippmann, and by Bourne, that scientific efficiency must be accompanied by democracy in education, industry, and all areas of life. He noted that "even the movement for 'scientific management' got no further in its psychology than the importance of standardizing methods of production; it never perceived the importance of enlisting the cooperation of the workers in discovering and fixing these standards for themselves."[14]

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[13] Cremin holds that Dewey's *Schools of Tomorrow* and Bourne's articles in the *New Republic* were major factors in creating public interest in the Gary Schools. (cf. pp. 153-8). Yet Callahan cites neither of these sources in his section on the Gary schools (pp. 126 ff.). Neither Bourne nor Dewey saw in Gary the negative stress on efficiency which Callahan's sources describe.

Callahan notes that the American Federation of Teachers opposed the "cult of efficiency" as early as 1912 and that John Dewey denounced it in the *New Republic* in 1922. (Cf. 120-122). But he does not report that by 1917 the liberal journals were supporting the teachers unions on this issue or that Dewey himself attacked business-oriented efficiency in industry and education in the *New Republic* in 1918.

III

While *New Republic* writers were attacking efficiency which was not based on democracy, the *Nation* was assailing it as part of the new educational trend which was leading to an excess of democracy. In 1916, a *Nation* editorial commented on the program which had been issued for the annual convention of the National Education Association. The teachers were being offered a number of meetings which revolved around the current mania for efficiency. The editors noted that efficiency was becoming the "watchword of public education," but that if education became too standardized and mechanized, "such efficiency was no better than a steamroller."

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[14] John Dewey, review of Helen Marot's *Creative Industry*, *New Republic*, 17 (11/2/18), 20, 23. Carmine Yengo lists this article in his sources for "John Dewey and the Cult of Efficiency," but does not cite it in his text or notes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 34 (Winter, 1964), 33-53.

In the next decade, journal writers continued to take the position that scientific management provided only a means, not an end. Stuart Chase wrote in the *New Republic* in 1924 that scientific management is "a sound and magnificent technique, but it is a technique which may be used either for liberation or exploitation." (v. 40, p.151).

The editors observed the general - but only partly laudable - identification of democracy and efficiency; of the effort to democratize opportunity by making people equally efficient in earning a living and in carrying on the other activities of life. But the editors seemed to fear that the schools might become _too_ efficient in this area; that the very success of the school tended to "relieve parents of all sense of responsibility in the instruction of their children. The more the schools undertake, the more the parents shirk. The result is bound to be a levelling of minds and manners."

What the editors were objecting to, of course, was the assumption by the school of a wider variety of social functions; of its development as a legatee institution. And it was in these terms that they saw the efficiency movement; it was part of a whole trend - which they rejected - away from cultural education and toward vocational, practical, materialistic training.

The _Nation_ also feared the effects of the efficiency movement on instructors. In this same editorial they questioned the adoption of mechanical methods and procedures which would inhibit the "character and originality of the individual teacher."[15] And two years earlier they had given Columbia's

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[15] The above quotations are all from an editorial, "The National Education Association," _Nation_, 102 (6/29/16), 690-91. This issue carried the N.E.A. annual program as a supplement. There was a large amount of educational matter in the issue, including indictments of the Gary System by Fuller (in a review of Bourne's _The Gary Schools_) and by George L. Fox.

President Butler a rare note of praise for opposing "the foolish and wrong-headed proposal of applying to the teaching body of a university the mechanical tests of the efficiency engineer."

But if efficiency practices were deadening for teachers, they were even more so for students - who were, after all, the chief concern of the whole educational process. Thus the editors found it necessary to also condemn Butler for his proposal that physical examinations be required of Columbia entrants. They saw such a plan as the expression of an overriding and misdirected "itch for perfection." In regard to his professors, Butler had written, "A university is precluded from being efficient in the mechanical or business sense by its essential character and essential policies." The Nation added: "Most true - and applicable just as truly to the spirit in which the university should regard its body of students as to that in which it should view questions of faculty organization."[16]

IV

While the pre-1918 Nation had suspected efficiency in education primarily because of its apparent connection with vocational studies, the growth of the school's functions, and with "extreme democracy,"[17] the journal under Villard took a position more like that of the New Republic. The similarities of the post-1918 stands of the journals on the related questions of efficiency, the influence of business on education, and the social role of education were evident in the journals' reviews of Thorstein Veblen's Higher Learning in America. The New Republic review, written by Harold Laski, quoted Veblen's charge that "the University apes the great business organization. It lays emphasis upon its quantitative output — the number of its students, the writing in bulk of its professors."

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[16] Editorial, Nation, 99 (12/3/14), 648-9. The matter of physical examinations seems a rather odd issue on which to mount an attack on efficiency in education, but this may be indicative of the depth of conviction which the editors had on the subject. This editorial was written by Fabian Franklin (N.Y.P.L.).

Like Veblen, Laski deplored the conservative effect of the business domination which created this atmosphere: "In every subject that nearly touches the business world, heterodoxy is at a discount." And Laski shared Veblen's conviction that university control by trustees had to be abolished if the institutions were to be free to pursue their truly creative functions. But, although Laski saw The Higher Learning in America as "the profoundest analysis that has been made of the weaknesses of the American university system," he could not accept Veblen's non-reformist conclusions. Laski insisted that the university could not "decry utilitarian pursuits; for the simple and satisfactory reason that its main business is the service of man. Mr. Veblen's own hypothesis is open to the danger which follows every worshipper of research for its own sake; he takes his laboratory and calls it life."[18]

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[17] This phrase was used in the editorial on the National Education Association meeting. Nation, v. 107, p. [illegible]

The *Nation*'s reviewer, Joseph Jastrow, was also generally positive in his reaction to *The Higher Learning in America*. He was clearly taken by Veblen's pungent, ironic style, and quoted extensively from the book. Jastrow agreed with Veblen that "business success is by common consent, and quite uncritically, taken to be conclusive evidence in matters that have no relation to education." He summarized Veblen's observations on efficiency in education: "Every item of the mechanism of teaching must be standardized and made to tell a statistical tale, which alone falls within the comprehension of the laity." He deplored with Veblen also the practice of making educational decisions primarily on the basis of budgetary considerations.

Veblen had criticized the colleges for treating their faculties as employees, and Jastrow agreed with him that the professors were partly to blame for permitting this business-oriented practice to develop.

> Unquestionably, the commercializing - even admitting its inevitability in some measure - has been hastened and aggravated by the false spirit of concession, even the warm adoption of the programme, which the academy should have resisted wisely and vigorously and well.

Jastrow's only major criticism of the book was precisely that made by Laski in the *New Republic*: Veblen assumed that "the scholar desires to be or should be nothing more than a scholar." Where Veblen sought to conceal his moralism and humanitarianism behind a screen of pure, disinterested scholarship, Jastrow explicitly advocated a sense of social concern and an assumption by university personnel of responsibility for human betterment.[19]

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[18] Harold J. Laski, Review of Thorstein Veblen's *The Higher Learning in America*, *New Republic*, 17 (1/11/19), 317-18.

These reviews point up the interesting relationship of Veblen to the representatives of the "new liberalism." The liberal journals, in their usual eclectic fashion, accepted much of Veblen's argument while rejecting some of the illiberal conclusions to which he came. They welcomed him as an ally in the denunciation of the pecuniary control of science and technology, but while Veblen sought to substitute control by technicians the liberal journals followed Dewey in demanding greater democratic control.[20]

Certainly men like Dewey had more in common intellectually with scientists than with businessmen; but such liberals opposed the granting of inordinate power to any group. Thus they opposed Veblen's putatively amoral and socially disinterested role for higher education. They rejected his position that research should take place in a social and moral vacuum; instead, they insisted that research and education must be dedicated to the welfare of man. And that welfare could not be promoted by either the old commercial-industrial elitism or the new scientific-technical elitism.[21]

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[19] "Our Commercialized Universities," review of Thorstein Veblen's The Higher Learning in America, Nation, 108 (2/22/19), 276-8. (The N.Y.P.L. Nation identifies Joseph Jastrow as reviewer.)

[20] Cf. Veblen, "The Technicians and Revolution," (1921) in The Portable Veblen, ed. Max Lerner (New York: Viking Press, 1948), pp. 438-65.

The journals' positions on efficiency and education may be seen most clearly within this broad context. Both the Nation and the New Republic consistently recognized the need for rational economy measures in schools just as in other government enterprises, but joined in deploring the use of the efficiency fad as a means of lowering necessary educational expenditures.

But the Nation under Fuller associated efficiency with vocational, practical, and hyper-democratic trends in the schools and condemned the entire package; the New Republic, on the other hand, resisted efficiency measures primarily because they were closely tied to business-oriented conservatism. And under Villard, the Nation came to share the "new liberal" position of its sister journal - that science and efficiency were only creative to the extent that they were accompanied by an extension of democracy.[22]

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[21] These are rough categories, but they represent some of the elite groups to which various thinkers have looked for political salvation. As noted above, members of the New Republic group had an early and short-lived faith in a business elite; the pre-1918 Nation had an excess of faith in the scholarly-cultural elite; but Villard's Nation joined the New Republic in insisting that democratic control had to be strengthened to prevent the accretion of unrestrained power to any group, however efficient, wise, or beneficent.

The above analysis of Veblen is based on his writings and on the reviewer's reading of him. It is quite likely that he was not as aloof and disinterested as he tried to appear. Cf. Morton White, Social Thought in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 - revised edition), pp. 89-93.

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[22] Both Callahan and Yengo reach similar conclusions on the relationships of science, efficiency, and democracy. But it is important to stress - as they do not - that a degree of alienation (like the "cultural" alienation of the early Nation or the politically liberal alienation of Dewey, Villard, and the New Republic) may help individuals and groups to see such relationships with some perspective.

Chapter Four: Scholars and Their Bosses[1]

I

Throughout the period under study both the *Nation* and the *New Republic* were consistent defenders of academic freedom at all levels of education. This position on the part of liberal journals is so predictable that it would hardly warrant consideration here, were it not for one important fact: During the years 1914-1921 there was a clear distinction between the means proposed by the "old liberal," Fuller, and the "new liberal," Villard, for the defense and extension of academic freedom. Under Fuller, although the *Nation* deplored illiberal attacks on teachers and professors, it offered little more than ringing prose in defense of their rights. But under Villard, the *Nation* joined the *New Republic* in forcefully promoting organizations and unions as instruments of self-defense for teachers. In short, the new liberalism added power to persuasion in the promotion of academic freedom.

Actually, the magazines often considered together two related but separable issues - academic freedom and the system of school and university government. Since violations of academic freedom were usually committed by trustees or by administrators acting as their agents, the journals often used the same editorials to defend individual instructors and to attack the existing pattern of school and university control.

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[1] This was the title of a *Nation* editorial on academic freedom; v. 102 (2/9/21), 199-200.

The contrast between the journals on this issue during the pre-1918 period was evident in their handling of the formation of the American Association of University Professors in early 1915. The *Nation* carried a rather bland, detailed report on the organizational meetings by Morris Jastrow, one of the participants. Jastrow noted the group's decision to exclude college presidents from membership, but handled this largely as a technical issue. Similar treatment was accorded to the discussions of tenure and academic ranking. But singularly lacking in his report was attention to the social context of these matters or the academic dissatisfaction which lay behind the formation of the group.[2]

The *New Republic*, however, was more familiar with the various forces and pressures which had led to the new organization. Two years earlier, Herbert Croly had been the only non-professor to serve on an academic freedom committee formed by several learned societies. John Dewey and Alvin Johnson, both New Republic contributors and later editorial board members, were among the founders of the A.A.U.P.[3] It is not surprising, then, that the New Republic saw the new organization in greater social perspective. The editors ignored the technicalities of the situation and commented on the central issue involved, concluding as follows:

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[2] Morris Jastrow, "Professors in Council," *Nation*, 100 (2/4/15), 146-7. This was comparable to the lengthy reports on meetings of the various learned societies which the *Nation* carried at this time. On the founding of the A.A.U.P., see Walter P. Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961 - first published in 1955), p. 194 ff.

> Several of the speakers seemed to be morbidly afraid that the association might be popularly misconceived as a labor union. Almost they did protest too much. A union of professors must differ essentially from a union of wage-earners, but the new association is seeking none the less an object analogous to that of an ordinary union. It is seeking increasing independence for its members by means of organization and community of spirit.[4]

During Fuller's editorship, the Nation, while deploring violations of academic freedom, gave little attention to the vulnerability of professors and teachers or to the need for collective action on their part. Consistent with its moralistic, individualistic world-view, the journal seemed to hope that the offending school boards and trustees in these cases could be persuaded to deal most justly with their faculties and to take their social responsibilities more seriously. Not atypical (though more vigorously expressed than usual) was the Nation's comment on the dismissal of Scott Nearing by the University of Pennsylvania trustees. It declared that the idea that the University was "not altogether a public institution . . . will have to be pried out of these gentlemen's heads."[5]

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[3] Metzger, pp. 200-203.

[4] Editorial, New Republic, 1 (1/9/15), 4-5.

But while the Nation looked to persuasion as a means of progress in this area, the New Republic unequivocally supported collective action by educators as well as representation of teachers and professors on school and university boards. In early 1915 the journal carried an article by F. I. Davenport which criticized the existing system of non-professional, local control of schools. The author proposed that teachers cease to look upon themselves as employees and gain representation on school boards. But a major difficulty in such a program was that teachers had been too effectively "drilled in reverence for properly constituted authority," and were thus unwilling to assume responsibility.[6]

The New Republic assumed the task of undermining this sense of reverence for authority and of promoting more collective action by educators. In a Veblenesque editorial in July 1915, the journal called for greater public and faculty representation on university governing boards. It admitted that the existing pattern of control might have been tolerable when boards of trustees were top-heavy with ministers. "But with the passing of control from the ghostly to the moneyed element, the gulf between trustee and professor has become extreme." It hoped that a peaceful sharing of power might take place, but had suggestions for faculty action in the likely event that this did not occur:

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[5] Editorial, Nation, 100 (6/24/15), 698. Cf. also 106 (1/24/18), 79.

[6] F. I. Davenport, "Reconstructing Boards of Education," New Republic, 2 (4/3/15), 229-30. Dewey made a similar protest against the fact that the educational profession was not represented on the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education. Cf. "A Policy of Industrial Education," New Republic, 1 (12/19/14), 11-12. Cf. also the letter from Dewey and others protesting violations of academic freedom at the University of Utah: Nation, 100 (5/16/15), 491-2.

> Trustees who really envisage the modern university as a public service, as a body of scientific and sociological experts, will gladly share their power. If they do not, they will demonstrate how radically their own conception of a university differs from the general one, and it will be the duty of professors to assert their rights by all those forms of collective organization whereby controlled classes from the beginning of time have made their ideas effective.[7]

II

After Villard became its editor in 1918, the *Nation* joined the *New Republic* in recommending vigorous collective action by teachers and professors. Two weeks after the Armistice, the *Nation* responded to the numerous attacks on academic freedom and to attempts to use the schools as instruments of reactionary propaganda by declaring that "the sooner all the teachers organize to protect themselves and rid the schools of politics, the better."[8]

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[7] Editorial, *New Republic*, 3 (7/17/15), 269-70. A similar statement, objecting to exclusive university government by trustees as "absentee landlordism," appeared in an editorial on March 10, 1917: (v. 3, pp. 149-50).

[8] Editorial, *Nation*, 107 (11/23/18), 613. The editorial was written by associate editor William MacDonald. (N.Y.P.L. edition).

In 1920, the year of the infamous Palmer raids and other assaults on freedom, the Nation's editors registered a firm protest against the action of the Pennsylvania Superintendent of Schools, who had in effect denied teachers the right to join unions. But the journal, having lost faith in the power of pure persuasion to change the actions of officials and other defenders of the status quo, gave the responsibility to the aggrieved educators: "It will be the fault of the teachers themselves if they go on accepting this 'new freedom,' and allow the disciplinary necessities of an army to determine their rights and duties. We have only one counsel for the teachers of this country: that is to unite to secure the right of free teaching and a proper remuneration for their work."[9]

Partly because of changed conditions, partly because of its new leadership, the Nation had moved a considerable distance from the positions it had taken under More and Fuller. A 1919 editorial contended that the A.A.U.P. had "failed lamentably" to defend academic freedom during the war and praised those professors who were organizing local branches of the American Federation of Teachers. The editors took the occasion to indulge in a rare bit of retrospection: "Of course, such a step has been greeted in some quarters as a sign that

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[9] Editorial Nation, 111 (8/21/20), 202-3. (Also by MacDonald; cf. N.Y.P.L. edition). An indication of the Nation's disaffection from its earlier "old liberal" sympathies was its sarcastic use of Wilson's term, "new freedom." Croly had decided some time before that the new freedom might better be called "the old bondage."

Bolshevist principles are invading our institutions of learning, and it is no doubt true that the Nation itself would have been pained and shocked, a dozen years ago, by the news."[10] Now, however, the Nation was greeting the unionizing of professors with enthusiasm, rather than with pain and shock. In this, as in so many other cases, Villard's journal had come around to the more radical and more political position already vigorously expressed by the New Republic.

There are a number of explanations which might be given for the positions taken by the liberal journals during this period on academic freedom and on school and university control. Of these, three seem particularly significant:

1) Explanation is required, first of all, for the amount of attention given to these matters. A basic reason, of course, is the fact that these journals were written by and read by intellectuals. The editors and writers were college graduates with more than a passing interest in educational concerns, and the journals' readers also constituted a highly educated group, many of whom were faculty members of

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[10] Editorial, "The Unionizing of Professors," Nation, 119 (8/23/19), 237. John Dewey was active in the work of the American Federation of Teachers. Cf. Howard K. Beale, Are American Teachers Free? (New York: Scribner's, 1936), pp. 707-8.

schools and colleges.[11] To such men, questions of academic freedom and the government of educational institutions were not subjects of esoteric interest: they were of immediate personal concern.

Furthermore, both journals wanted intellectuals to play larger roles in American society - which they could only do in an atmosphere of freedom. The pre-1918 *Nation* hoped that college men might help arrest what it saw as a mass drift to narrow practicalism in life. And even when it changed its social goals somewhat under Villard, the *Nation* clung to its hope that university-trained experts might play a major role in reform.

The *New Republic*, although more democratic than the early *Nation*, also hoped that college faculties and graduates might exert an influence out of proportion to their numbers. A 1915 editorial in that journal contended that issues of academic freedom and university government were "as vital as any in American life, because the universities are coming more and more to focus the thought of the nation. We depend upon them as upon no other institution to inspire and discipline the democracy."[12] Thus in the eyes of the editors, the individual interest of faculty members converged with the social interest. Questions of academic freedom and university government were of national as well as personal concern.

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[11] Croly, Lippmann, and Villard were Harvard graduates; Weyl was a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Cf. Forcey, pp. 11, 53, 101, Humes, p. 6. For the readership of the journals, see Wood, p. 189, and Forcey, p. 175. Forcey writes that the *New Republic* was aimed at "teachers, professors, civil servants, social workers, enlightened politicians and businessmen."

It should be noted that the term "liberal journalists," as used in this study, does not apply in the same way to all of the persons considered. Some, like Croly, Villard, and their successors, Bruce Bliven and Freda Kirchway, would probably have identified themselves primarily as liberal journalists. Some, like Walter Lippmann, were primarily journalists, but not consistently liberal. Some, like Alvin Johnson, were liberal college professors who became full-time journalists for varying periods of time. And still others, like Dewey and Robert M. Lovett, were professors who "moonlighted" as liberal journalists while devoting the bulk of their time to academic pursuits.

2) The above explanations, however, might have held true even had the journals been spokesmen for intellectual conservatism. Liberals and radicals were not the only supporters of academic freedom. But during much of the latter part of this period, it was the liberals who were under attack, in politics and journalism as well as in schools and colleges. There was thus a community of interest among academic and journalistic liberals. During the war, for example, the *Outlook* attacked the *New Republic* as one of America's "public enemies," and included it with the Hearst papers, the German-language press, and the International Workers of the World among the "sappers and miners" in America.[13]

Such attacks came even though the *New Republic* supported America's participation in the war. The journal had merely exercised its right to be critical of the conduct of the war and of the motives of the allies. But the *Nation* went further. It opposed American participation in the war and went through a much-publicized clash with government censorship.[14] Such events, continued and intensified during the Red Scare and the Palmer raids, forced liberals to unite in support of their rights. Thus the journals' vigorous fight for academic freedom may be seen also as an effort at self-defense. Attacks on liberals in any field had to be repulsed if liberalism itself was to be safe.

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[12] Editorial, *New Republic*, 3 (6/26/15), 185-6.

[13] Editorial, *The Outlook*, 116 (8/29/17), 644-6.

3) There is a third, somewhat broader, explanation for the Nation's and New Republic's positions on academic freedom. Concern for individual freedom was central to the social philosophies of both the old and the new liberalisms. But, as has been noted, the old liberalism placed more emphasis on individualistic means for the promotion of this freedom; the new liberalism recognized that in an increasingly corporate, organized society, collective means were required for individualistic ends.

A corollary of the above was the Nation's shift in emphasis from persuasion to power. During its "old liberal" stage the Nation had an extravagant faith in the rationality of man, and in the power of intellectuals to convince those in power to act more justly and humanely. But Villard, somewhat chastened by America's experience in World War I, and disillusioned by what he saw as Wilson's false leadership, no longer hoped that those who controlled America's industry and education would willingly acquiesce in a diminution of their powers. Villard was, of course, a pacifist, and he never proposed violence or class conflict as a solution to social or educational problems. But he did join the *New Republic* in vigorously supporting efforts by suppressed groups - whether educators or laborers - to non-violently and collectively demand and promote their rights.

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[14] Villard, p. 354 ff.

Thus by 1918 the *Nation* and the *New Republic* had staked out policies on academic freedom and on teacher organizations to which they would adhere throughout the period covered by this study. But, as we shall see later, though their positions on these matters did not undergo any essential change, the situations to which they applied them varied considerably. During the 1920's, with liberalism on the defensive, unions of teachers and professors made little headway. And then, in the 1930's, the liberal journals found themselves supporting an organizational movement among educators that was militant enough and successful enough to be wracked by serious factional disputes. Later chapters will consider the responses of the *Nation* and the *New Republic* to these developments.

Chapter Five: Education and Reform

I

Lawrence Cremin, in The Transformation of the School, has described three main elements of the progressive education movement: the scientific, the child-centered, and the reformist.[1] All three of these emphases were present in progressive education in the 1914-1921 period, but it is clear that the liberal journals were primarily interested in promoting a reformist role for the schools. "Reformist," of course, is a term which covers a wide range of policies and programs, including both the mild, genteel brand of progress through persuasion advocated by the pre-1918 Nation as well as the more vigorous, power-oriented reform which it joined the New Republic in supporting after 1918.

Cremin has pointed out also the "inextricable relationships between social reform, reform through education, and the reform of education."[2] An exploration of these relationships - which are particularly evident in the liberal journals - may cast further light on the connections between progressive journalism and progressive education.

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[1] Cremin, pp. 288; 179.

[2] Cremin, p. 85.

Classification and definition in this area are difficult, but perhaps the most appropriate term for the educational position of Fuller's Nation is "pre-progressive." The terms "conservative" or "reactionary" seem too strong, for the Nation did not indulge in unrestrained polemics against new educational developments. It attempted to assess them calmly and moderately, often damning pedagogical innovations with faint praise. It recognized a certain worth in the new education, but consistently expressed the hope that traditional cultural values would not be lost in the new era. And while the pre-1918 Nation rejected much of the emerging educational philosophy and methodology, it maintained an essential faith in the schools as agents of moderate reform. It did not join in the truly conservative response described by Welter in which some of the more hidebound thinkers "substituted representation for education" in their democratic theory.[3]

The Nation under Fuller saw itself as a reformist journal, but insisted that reform must come under the auspices of benevolent middle-class men like its editors and readers. In fact, writers for the magazine took almost as much pleasure in hurling verbiage at the grubby radicals as at the boated plutocrats. In 1914, for example, the Nation criticized "social-justice shouters" who had demanded a constitutional amendment for dealing with a problem which was being solved in a more restrained fashion.[4] A similar attitude was expressed a year later in Fuller's review of The Gary Schools (cited earlier). Fuller wrote:

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[3] Welter, p. 285. See pages 283-9 for a fuller definition of the conservative position on education during this period.

> The Gary system has been thrust to the fore at a critical period in the history of this country, and the very nicety with which it appears to respond to present tendencies should make one the more suspicious of it as a cure-all. At a time when the excesses of the 'uplift' movement have resulted in a general letting down of the sense of individual responsibility on the part of the victims of economic pressure, Mr. Wirt proposes a plan in which discipline is almost entirely relaxed.[5]

Fuller was expressing here the dilemma which has continually plagued individualistic reformers. While recognizing the seriousness of the problems to which the Gary system was a response, he could not accept the means which were adopted to solve those problems. His hope seemed to be that the old education, improved in some undefined way, might still be adequate in the modern situation. In short, although he had a mild hope that education might be an instrument of reform, he was not willing to make the reforms within education itself which would have made this possible.

The views expressed by Fuller were reflected in articles and reviews by other Nation writers. A 1915 article by Warner Fite criticized the idea that state universities were more important in a democracy than were private colleges. He saw state institutions of higher education as too utilitarian, while private colleges were essential precisely because of their distance from mundane concerns: "It is mere socialistic nonsense to suppose that an institution which lies outside of the political system performs no 'social function.'"[6]

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[4] Editorial, Nation, 99 (12/17/14), 705.

[5] Harold Fuller, "The Gary System," Nation, 102 (6/29/16), 699.

A 1916 editorial objected to the emphasis laid by educators on "social values," which might "signify an entirely mischievous conception of what a school can attempt - for who shall lightly say what the social values of any community are?" The writer objected to the trend toward "extreme democracy" in education, and concluded that

> at present the schools are, with the best of intentions in the world, in much the same position as the clergyman who, when he might be interpreting Holy Writ, is telling his congregation how they should vote.[7]

There was one area, however, in which Fuller's Nation was more outspoken on reform of and through education. The journal - consistent with its tradition of promoting justice and progress for Negroes - continually called for better educational opportunities for that group.[8] In a statement by Villard, it applauded the work of the General Education Board in raising the standards of Negro education. But it rejected the widely-held view that all Negro education should be simple training for menial vocations. The journal applauded the efforts of those Negroes who - against great odds - acquired a higher education, and it insisted that the way should be kept clear for all who had the ambition and ability to follow them.[9]

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[6] Warner Fite, "The State University Idea," Nation, 101 (9/9/15), 322-4.

[7] Editorial, Nation, 102 (6/29/16.), 691.

[8] Concern for the Negro was a tradition with the Nation's owners and editors. The first literary editor of the journal was William Lloyd Garrison's son; the current owner, Oswald Garrison Villard, was his grandson. Cf. Villard, ch. I.

But even this position, liberal though it was for the time, was not reformist in the broader sense. The *Nation*'s position was that Negroes should have educational opportunity equal to that available for Whites. This was not the same as proposing that education should help to create a new social order. The *Nation* wanted Negroes to be able to work their way into white society; it was not yet ready to say that the schools might assist in the radical reconstruction of that society.

Thus Fuller's *Nation* held fast to the older view that education might promote the reform of individuals; that the American economy and polity were basically sound and that the schools should tend to their primary function of producing individuals of worthy character who could work within that system and help to elevate its moral tone. There were in society serious problems of corruption, crime, violence, and racial injustice, but these were primarily evidence of weaknesses of character and training in the people who made up society. What was needed was neither a new education nor a new social order, but means of making the old work more effectively.

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[9] *Nation*, 100 (2/18/15), 187-5. This statement was written by Villard (cf. N.Y.P.L. edition), and while advanced for the *Nation* at that time, was not nearly as radical as Villard's later pronouncements on education. (See Part IV, below). On Villard's work for the Negro and for Negro education, cf. Wreszin, pp. 28-9.

II

The New Republic, on the other hand, was dissatisfied not only with the character and intelligence of individuals, but with the economic, political, and educational system which shaped those individuals. Croly, Weyl, and Lippmann saw that modifications in social organization had been made necessary by recent vast changes in science and industry. These men were on the one hand more acceptant than Fuller of the irreversible technological revolution which had taken place; on the other they were less acceptant of the complex of social arrangements left over from an earlier period. They were adherents of the view expressed by Thorstein Veblen that "institutions are products of the past process, are adapted to past circumstances, and are therefore never in full accord with the requirements of the present."[10] Given this inevitable conservative tendency of social institutions, it became the responsibility of liberals to seek environmental as well as individual change.

Thus one finds in the New Republic during this period, more than in the *Nation*, considerable interest in economic planning, a selective enthusiasm for some aspects of socialism, and a greater warmth towards organized labor. The capitalistic system was not a "given"; it was not an expression of natural law, and men could mold it and modify it as they saw fit. As with the economy so with the educational system. Recognizing that schools and colleges had a built-in inertia, men should attempt even more vigorously to adjust the content and methods of education in the interest of social welfare.

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[10] Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: Mentor, 1953), p. 133. (First published in 1899).

As was noted above, part of Randolph Bourne's enthusiasm for the Gary schools was based on his belief that they provided new institutional patterns, new techniques, and new approaches to content which would help to develop more creative individuals and a more just social order. The educational views which Bourne expressed were, as he declared, "the product of an enthusiasm for the educational philosophy of John Dewey." And if his articles were sometimes little more than translations and popularizations of Dewey's views, "what," he asked, "is a good philosophy for except to paraphrase?"[11]

In an article which the New Republic carried in early 1915, Bourne claimed that Dewey's ideas were profoundly radical; that he was "in the paradoxical situation of a revolutionist with an innate contempt for propaganda." Dewey's philosophy embodied "some of the wisest words ever set to paper." Bourne admired Dewey for bringing order out of social and intellectual chaos. He had demonstrated "the unity of all democratic strivings, the social movement, the new educational ideals, the freer ethics, the popular revolt in politics . . . and the applicability to all of them of scientific method."[12]

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[11] Bourne, *Education and Living*, p. vi.

But the readers of the New Republic did not receive Dewey's ideas only "in translation." Dewey spoke for himself in over fifty-two articles, notes, letters, and reviews which he wrote for the journal during this period.[13] Much of this mass of material, particularly before 1918, dealt directly or incidentally with education. In his articles, Dewey missed few opportunities to promote his view of reform of and through education. He was particularly outspoken in his opposition to attempts to separate vocational and liberal education. In his first New Republic article he denounced such attempts as part of an effort to make education a prop to an unjust economic system:

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[12] Bourne, "John Dewey's Philosophy," New Republic, 2 (3/13/15), 153.

[13] For a complete listing of Dewey's articles see Milton Thomas, John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 41-63. Groff Conklin wrote in 1936: "John Dewey, next to the editors themselves, has been the N.R.'s most influential contributor. His famous series of essays on China, and ones on Russia, Mexico, and the Near East, as well as his frequent articles on education and political philosophy, have helped to set the tone of the journal all through its history." The New Republic Anthology: 1915-1935. (New York: Dodge Publishing Co., 1936). Dewey was a contributing editor of the journal from 1922 to 1937.

> Every ground of public opinion protests against any use of the public school system which takes for granted the perpetuity of the existing industrial regime, and whose inevitable effect is to perpetuate it, with all its antagonisms of employer and employed, producer and consumer.[14]

In an article carried by the journal four months later, Dewey again objected to the idea of dividing the school system into academic and vocational branches. Such proposals were based on the desire of conservative groups to establish a stratified society. If successful, such splits would make it easier for further divisions to occur along religious or national-origins lines, and the schools would lose their role as unifiers of culture.[15] Here, as in his other New Republic articles, Dewey expressed one of his central educational ideas: that the schools should not be passive reflectors of social trends - that they had an obligation to resist and counteract the rigidities and injustices of society, not to reinforce them.

While Bourne and Dewey were calling for reforms within the schools which would enable education to promote desired social changes, Walter Lippmann - as Rush Welter has pointed out - was calling for a more educative politics.[16] Lippmann tried above all to be a realist - to assess correctly man's limited rationality. Yet he joined his interest in charismatic leadership and in the use of myths in guiding social groups with a consistent call for more educational procedures in politics.

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[14] Dewey, "A Policy of Industrial Education," New Republic, 1 (12/19/14), 11-12.

[15] Dewey, "Splitting Up the School System," New Republic, (4/17/15), 283-4.

Bruce Bliven, who was an editor of the New Republic during most of Dewey's association with it, has said that the journal's positions on educational issues were in close harmony with Dewey's. Bliven has noted also that Dewey wrote in "clumsy English," but that he knew he needed good editors, and never complained about the drastic revisions that his articles often required. (Interview with author, 8/23/65).

Lippmann recognized that the liberal Jeffersonian ideal of government was no longer viable; that in politics there must be "insiders and outsiders," - leaders and followers. But he blames the failure of many of the administrative reforms of the progressives on the fact that leaders had failed to enlighten the public properly on the issues: "The power which has educated the insiders has left the outsiders uninformed. So they listen to the largest hope and follow the most magnetic personality."[17]

Throughout his life, Lippmann has carried on a dialogue with himself concerning the rationality of man. He has moved - in his political thought - between the extreme positions of elitism and educationalism. But during his association with the New Republic, his emphasis was on the need for an electorate as broadly and as realistically educated as possible. He fully understood the egocentricity of man, the role of the unconscious in motivation, and the public's susceptibility to propaganda, and yet - because he retained a basic faith in the democratic process - he persisted in the belief that man could be educated well enough to enable a free society to function.[18]

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[16] Cf. Walter, pp. 271-5.

[17] Lippmann, "Insiders and Outsiders," New Republic, 5 (11/13/15), 35-6.

III

As in the case of the other issues dealt with in this paper, the Nation under Villard's new leadership came to express a position on education and reform similar to that of the New Republic. After 1918 the Nation ceased to give space to peevish traditionalists who bemoaned the increasing "socialization" of education. Instead there was a growing enthusiasm for such ventures as the New School for Social Research and the Boston Trade Union College.[19] There was encouragement for "the effort to relate the universities more closely to community needs and of spontaneous movements among the workers themselves for a full educational opportunity." Such educational innovations encouraged the hope that America might

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[18] In Drift and Mastery, for example, Lippmann recognized the role of the unconscious in politics and life, but advocated "the substitution of conscious intention for unconscious striving." (p. 148) Of all Lippmann's books, Drift and Mastery - which appeared in 1914 - was closest in spirit to his New Republic articles.

[19] William L. Stoddard, "The Boston Trade Union College," Nation, 109 (8/30/19), 298-300. Cf. also 106 (5/4/18), 541-3, where a review of fifteen educational books showed considerable sympathy for progressive innovations.

"eventually emulate the French in recognizing 'the moral obligation to be intelligent.'"[20]

An editorial note in early 1921 indicated how the various elements of the *Nation*'s new educational outlook could converge. The editors praised a recent convention of the American Federation of Teachers which had adopted a liberal policy on Americanization programs in the schools. The assembled teachers had taken a stand in favor of cultural pluralism; they had rejected the view that Americanization meant discarding the "negative" traits of the immigrants and adopting the Anglo-Saxon characteristics of the "true" American. In their brief statement the editors demonstrated: (1) their sympathy for a unionized teaching profession; (2) their rejection of a narrow chauvinism as a policy for the schools; and (3) their belief that the schools should function as critics of society. They concluded:

> Whatever demagogues may do, teachers have a more self-respecting task than to praise the country for qualities which it does not possess; it is their obligation to point out the national shortcomings as well as the national virtues.[21]

The editors and contributors of the *Nation* had clearly come to accept the "new liberal" point of view that the schools *should* go beyond cultural transmission and engage in the process of cultural transformation. But there was less unanimity concerning the part that education could play in social change. Some contributors, like Harold Laski, expressed the rather extravagant hope that formal educational institutions might - even in the short run - make the difference between success and failure for society. Laski closed a 1920 article on "British Labor and Direct Action" with the declaration that the Labor Party needed "above all to embark upon a far more extensive educational policy. One gets the sense . . . in England that we are running a race between education and revolution. If labor gives to institutions like the Workingmen's Educational Association the support and funds they deserve, some way out of the present chaos may be found."[22]

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[20] Review, "Books in Brief,' *Nation*, 111 (9/4/20), 277. The reviewer was Dorothy Brewster. (Cf. N.Y.P.L. edition.)

[21] Editorial note, *Nation*, 112 (2/23/21), 279. The note was-written by Carl Van Doren. (N.Y.P.L. edition.)

In the same year, M. H. Hedges - more disillusioned, perhaps - raised grave doubts about the reforming power of the schools:

> Education is not . . . an extra-social process by which society is constantly freshened and transformed. Rather it lies within society and tends to reproduce in miniature the society which has borne it.

But Hedges was referring to existing educational institutions, which promoted either the Puritan ideal ("celestial propaganda") of Jonathan Edwards or the utilitarian ethic of Benjamin Franklin. He had a hope - albeit a faint one - that these outworn views of education might give way to a pioneering spirit more suited to the modern age. If colleges could begin to

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[22] Laski, "British Labor and Direct Action," Nation, 106 (8/21/20), 214-15.

"supply students with a sense of a 'total universe of good' that is not fictitious, and to awaken in them the will to act in behalf of that universe," there might be grounds for optimism. But Hedges could not sustain so sanguine a view, and concluded rather dimly that "the chances for the colleges to answer the need of this generation . . . are small."[23]

Hedges may be taken as a convenient exemplar of the educational views of many post-war liberals. The experience of war abroad and reaction at home had deepened the liberal conviction that society was in need of drastic reformation; the hope that education might be an agent of cultural renewal would not die; and yet there was the note of pessimism - the sense that what education should do it actually would not do. It was this sense of pessimism that strengthened the flight of many liberals during the 1920's from politics to aesthetics and of many educators from "reformist" to "child-centered" schools and curricula.[24]

IV

In 1918 the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued its influential report, the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.[25] Early the following year, the editors of the New Republic published their reaction to the report in an editorial which may be taken as the definitive expression of their position on education and reform in the early post-war period. Characteristically, the editors ascribed to the document a more radically reformist cast than was probably intended by its authors. The editors noted that America had always relied on education as "the chief bulwark of democracy," but that the school had functioned in a largely self-correcting social economy. But society was no longer self-improving, and both conservatives and radicals were demanding that the government assume a greater role in moral and political education in order to keep the social machinery running. This demand implied "both a radical break with the past and a long step toward collectivism in education."[26]

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[23] M. H. Hedges, "The Teacher's Real Dilemma," Nation 111 (8/21/20), 214-15.

[24] Cf. Cremin, ch. 6; also Sidney Kaplan, "Social Engineers as Saviors," Journal of the History of Ideas, 17 (June, 1956), 347-369. For some differences between the journals regarding the effects of the war, see the Nation, 111 (11/3/20) 489.

However, conservatives and radicals disagreed on the ideals and methods of education. Conservatives glorified discipline, obedience, and an unexamined loyalty to an unquestioned authority. They believed in an "intellectual police power" to keep the people on the "charted paths of virtue and truth." Radicals, on the other hand, emphasized the reform of institutions, not the demand for loyalty: "Social education must . . . start from the idea not only of the decrepitude of the old education but from the gross deficiencies of the affiliated social economy." In this context the editors cited the recently-enunciated Cardinal Principles as an appropriate ideal for America's educational enterprise, but recorded the sad fact that "our existing educational system fails flagrantly to realize that ideal." In order for the Commission's goals to be achieved, the schools had no choice except to actively accept their roles as legatee institutions. The state should "guarantee to all its citizens through the schools the economic independence which its social economy has failed to guarantee."

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[25] Cf. I. L. Kandel, American Education in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 125, 147, and 174. for a conservative interpretation of this report. The Commission was appointed by the National Education Association.

[26] This, and the succeeding quotations, are from an editorial entitled "Americanism in Education," New Republic, 19 (5/1[illegible]/19), 38-40.

Rush Welter has pointed out that in conservative hands such doctrine can make education a substitute for reform rather than an adjunct to it:

> What sophisticated business practice has accomplished, indeed, is to associate the competitive democratic values of Jacksonian and post-Jacksonian liberalism with the modern business system by improving educational opportunities for personal success within it and leading to it. In effect, progressive businessmen have transferred economic individualism from business to the schools and thus reconciled their innovations with traditional American values.[27]

Realistically recognizing that an open educational system might help to preserve a closed economy, conservatives have joined liberals in support of education.

But the liberal editors of the New Republic saw a deeper social role for the schools. They recognized that power was unequally distributed in the American system, and that power - not persuasion - was the key to progress for suppressed groups. Thus the state should "through its schools deliberately confer so far as possible the substance and opportunity of power on all its citizens." By so doing, the government would itself "serve as the chief agency of radical but remedial social change." The editors - after their vigorous presentation of these essentially Deweyan doctrines - closed quite appropriately by letting Dewey speak for himself. The goal of the new educational system would be, in his words, "to produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it, gradually to modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of adult society."[28]

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[27] Welter, p. 301.

The school, then, was to be the growing edge of culture. It was not to mirror existing society, nor was it merely to take some of the strain off the existing unjust system and thus enable it to survive. It was - within the limits of its own freedom of action - to mold itself in the image of democratic ideals; it would then be able to produce individuals with enough freedom and power to help move society along in desired directions.

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[28] The editors were quoting from Dewey's Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1961- 1st edition, 1916), p. 317.

The New Republic had thus kept the liberal faith. In spite of the war, in spite of the "twilight of idols" such as Roosevelt and Wilson, the editors of the New Republic still had confidence that reform and progress were possible: that the school could transcend its social context enough to enable it to play a significant role in social reconstruction.[29] If the vigorous, optimistic enthusiasm of Bourne's early educational articles was no longer possible, yet the core of the faith still lived. The emotional edge of the progressive faith may have been blunted by the disillusioning experiences of the war years, but still the editors of the New Republic believed that man was potentially educable and rational; that institutions retained some malleability and plasticity; and that there was still effective work to be done by an educative journalism and a socialized education.

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[29] The phrase "Twilight of Idols" was originally the title of an article in which the disillusioned Bourne indicted Dewey for his support of the war. The article has been reprinted in Bourne's War and the Intellectuals.

Chapter Six: Efficiency, Freedom, and Reform

I

The Nation was in its forty-ninth year when it was joined in the field of liberal journalism by the New Republic. E. L. Godkin's original prospectus for the Nation had, in 1865, declared as one of the journal's main purposes "the fixing of public attention upon the political importance of popular education . . . ."[1] This concern for educational matters was still more than evident in the years after 1914.

Dorothy and Willard Straight, who provided the funds for the founding of the New Republic in 1914, were also profoundly interested in education. In fact, according to Walter Lippmann, they originally conferred with Herbert Croly, not about founding a journal, but about starting "some kind of school, perhaps a university to be located in Washington and to be devoted to education for the public service."[2] The decision was made instead to start a journal of opinion, but the motivation for this venture was equally educational. In fact, throughout the history of the New Republic, one notes a tendency to pair journalism and education as powerful agencies for progress and reform. On the first anniversary of the weekly, in 1915, the editors listed among their most important duties the need to "advocate better schools and press."[3] And near the end of the period covered by this study, in 1939, the editors applauded the joint statement of a group of journalists and educators on behalf of democracy and free inquiry. They quoted extensively from the document, which concluded:

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[1] Quoted in One Hundred Years of the Nation: A Centennial Anthology, Henry M. Christman, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 27.

[2] Walter Lippmann, "Remarks on the Occasion of this Journal's 50th Year," New Republic, 150 (3/21/64), 14. The idea for such an institution may have derived from Croly's proposal for "A Great School of Political Science," set forth in an article by that title in The World's Work, 20 (May, 1910), 12887-8.

> Our role is to fulfill our true function as educators and journalists in a democratic society by keeping free /the/ channels of knowledge so that the people can examine the facts with the critical spirit necessary for intelligent appraisal and choice.

The editors closed their editorial by declaring that "the educators and publicists have got to start moving" in the defense of democracy.[4] In these cases and in others the editors made clear their belief in an alliance of journalists and educators as the best hope for progress and reform.

It is evident that the interest in education shown by the journals between 1914 and 1921 was, in the case of the Nation, the continuation of a long-standing tradition, and, for the New Republic, the beginning of another. But while the institutions and processes of education were of continuing interest to the journals, they tended to focus upon particular aspects of it during various periods. During the eight years surveyed above, the Nation and the New Republic gave special emphasis to the efficiency movement in schools and colleges, to problems of academic freedom, and to the role of educational institutions in the drive for progress and reform.

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[3] Quoted in "The New Republic: 1914-1954," New Republic, 131 (12/6/54), 17.

[4] Editorial, "Teachers' Manifesto," New Republic, 98 (5/3/39), 366.

It is appropriate here, before moving on to the nineteen-twenties, to survey briefly the major findings of the preceding chapters and to attempt a preliminary assessment of the role and effects of the liberal journals in regard to educational matters. The chief conclusions to be derived from the research reported above are easily summarized:

The first and most significant finding is that there was not during this period a simple one-to-one correlation between political liberalism and educational progressivism. The variety within political progressivism was reflected in a similar diversity of educational positions. This study has utilized two influential journals as indices of liberal thought on education, and has determined that the Nation, while acting as a proponent of the Wilsonian "New Freedom," was often suspicious of progressive developments in the schools; the New Republic, on the other hand, which was a spokesman for Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" was a vigorous partisan of Deweyan educational progressivism. This conclusion is further strengthened when one notes that the Nation's 1918 shift to a political position more like that of the New Republic was accompanied by a movement towards greater sympathy for progressive education as well.

The above finding was supported in varying degrees in three specific case studies. In the first, it was determined that both branches of liberalism, as represented by the two journals, were suspicious of the efficiency movement in education. The pre-1918 Nation resisted scientific management as the incursion into the schools of the industrial-commercial ethos which it found so distasteful; after Villard took over direction of that journal it moved closer to the New Republic's position that efficiency was to be admitted to the schools only as an instrument of progressive democratic values.

Secondly, it was noted that both journals consistently supported a greater measure of freedom for instructors at all levels of the educational establishment. But until 1918 the Nation clung to the hope that school boards and university trustees could be rationally persuaded to deal more justly with their staffs and to gradually grant them more autonomy; after the journal became a spokesman for the "new liberalism" it joined the New Republic in calling for vigorous organizational efforts and the use of coercive power by teachers in pursuit of their professional goals.

Thirdly, both journals believed throughout the period that schools and colleges should be instruments of reform. But again the new and old liberalisms expressed this impulse quite differently. Fuller's Nation hoped that the schools might turn out more ethical individuals who would raise the moral tone of society and politics. Villard's Nation and Croly's New Republic, on the other hand, thought that broad-gauge social reforms were in order, and promoted educational institutions and curricula which would hopefully set in motion such fundamental economic and political changes.

II

Since the policies of both the "New Freedom" and the "New Nationalism" have been subsumed above under the general heading of liberalism, it is worth asking what was common to the educational positions of both. Perhaps the fundamental element of continuity between their educational views, as expressed in the Nation and the New Republic, is that educational institutions should be "in but not of" society. While schools and colleges - like other institutions - were the products of the larger social order, they had an integrity and an independence of their own. They could not fulfill their social functions by blindly and uncritically transmitting the accepted values, traditions, and techniques of the culture. Only by maintaining a certain distance from existing social values could they really serve society.

This basic conviction worked itself out in different ways.

The "old liberalism" represented by Fuller attempted to stand somewhat aloof from the developing technical and industrial order, with its corrupt political manifestations. The *Nation* during this period attempted to improve society by holding fast to traditional classical, cultural values.

The *New Republic* and the post-1918 *Nation* felt, on the other hand, that the old tradition in education was no longer viable; but the "new liberals" were also alienated from the conservative, business-dominated civilization in which they found themselves. They called for a plague on both houses - that of genteel classicism and of crass, conservative materialism. They called on the schools to reform themselves - in effect, to form creative communities which could assist in the growth of a more humane and more just society.

Thus the journals urged the schools to be selective in choosing those aspects of culture most worthy of transmission and extension. This was particularly evident in their positions on efficiency in education. Both old and new liberals admitted (although the *Nation* somewhat reluctantly) that schools needed to adopt some of the efficiency measures which seemed so effective in business and industry. But both urged the schools to do so with discrimination - to use the tools of efficiency but to reject the conservative political ideology in which the efficiency movement had become enmeshed. Thus in an era when mass periodicals like the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Ladies Home Journal* were calling on schools to make a wholesale adoption of scientific management practices, the liberal journals - somewhat suspicious of popular values and fads - urged their use with restraint and selectivity.[5] Most important, the *New Republic* and Villard's *Nation* insisted that any utilization of scientific efficiency practices in the schools should be accompanied by increased democratization of the educational system.

The above examples illustrate the importance of having outspoken journals defending values somewhat at variance with those of the larger society. Another example may be offered to demonstrate the importance of diversity of opinion *within* the liberal group. Cremin has pointed out that one of the key weaknesses of progressive education lay in its "inordinate demands on the teacher's time and ability."[6] In their enthusiasm for the innovations being made in education, many partisans of the movement - including members of the *New Republic* group - failed to detect this weakness. But Fuller's *Nation*, lacking sympathy with the progressive trend, and seeking flaws in it, saw the situation clearly and vigorously called attention to it.[7] Had his criticisms, and similar ones made by other observers, been accepted and responded to, the progressive education movement might have been able to devote greater attention and effort to truly innovative teacher education - or at least to hold back on curricular reforms until highly-skilled teachers were available to make their success more likely.

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[5] Cf. Callahan, pp. 52-53 regarding magazine support for the efficiency movement in education.

[6] Cremin, pp. 348-9.

[7] Cf. above, p. 24 and p. 39.

The *Nation*'s and *New Republic*'s vigorous defense of academic freedom has been explored at length above. But it is worth noting again that some of the force of the journals' position came from the fact that they were themselves the objects of illiberal and anti-intellectual attacks. The dissentient position of the *Nation* on World War I and of both journals on economic and political issues exposed them to the same kind of harassment to which radical and pacifist educators were subjected. Doubtless the journals would have defended academic freedom even had they been intellectual spokesmen for the status quo; but it is more than likely that their own sense of alienation and of rejection by respectable and prestigious groups gave strength to their advocacy of intellectual freedom in education as in journalism.

VII

But all the above points refer to the content of the educational ideas promoted by the liberal journals. What can one say of their effects? Here the historian is, of course, in much more treacherous waters. One cannot quantify the impact of ideas on individuals, particularly when the ideas are varied and diffuse and the individuals often hidden and unknown. One can only offer impressionistic evidence which seems to indicate that some of the educational material of the journals seemed to be "getting through" to the readers. In this case, the available evidence centers around Randolph Bourne. When Bourne's article, "In a Schoolroom," appeared in the first issue of the New Republic, one of the editors, Francis Hackett, wrote Bourne that "at least eight people" including George Pratt of the Pratt Institute, had spoken to him about the piece. The article, according to Hackett, "seemed to express for these people a set of ideas very real to them but inarticulate."[8]

Four months later, upon the appearance of Bourne's article, "John Dewey's Philosophy," which gave considerable emphasis to Dewey's educational views, Bourne received an enthusiastic letter from James Harvey Robinson of Columbia University. Robinson wrote: "I have just read with very great pleasure your reflection on Professor Dewey." Bourne had lamented the lack of a good collection of some of Dewey's writings, and Robinson asked: "Why cannot an effort be made to get together the scattered things of which you speak? Could you not edit a volume of miscellany?" He closed by offering his assistance and that of some of his colleagues in such a venture.[9]

A less favorable, but no less vigorous response came from Edgar Dawson, a leader in American social studies education. Provoked by Bourne's New Republic articles on education, Dawson in the space of a week in December, 1914, wrote three letters to Bourne and received two in return. Dawson agreed with Bourne that formalism was one of the fundamental difficulties facing the schools, but felt that little could be done to improve the situation until "the community sees the necessity for appropriating enough money to employ enough teachers to teach." He feared that Bourne was proposing a freer rein for students in an over-crowded situation where more freedom could only lead to chaos.

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[8] Letter from Hackett to Bourne, 11/16/14, (Bourne papers).

[9] Letter from Robinson to Bourne, 3/13/15, (Bourne papers).

Dawson played the role of realist in contrast to Bourne's more utopian stance. He declared that "reform which runs ahead of the sense of the community may do more harm than good," adding pessimistically that "the sense of the community, so far as public education is concerned, is in a very unfortunate state." But though he disagreed with some of Bourne's implied educational prescriptions, it was clear that Dawson welcomed this new critic of education. He felt that Bourne's educational articles showed "a real interest in the problem that lies at the root of democracy" and "a thorough familiarity with the situation" and requested an opportunity to meet with him to continue their discussion of educational matters.[10]

Such responses do not, of course, prove that Bourne's articles had any effect on educational developments, but they do indicate that certain influential educators were much impressed by his ideas. And one can hardly doubt that the impact of Dewey's educational articles in the *New Republic* exceeded that of Bourne's. Though the *Nation* carried during this period no educational articles which were as innovative and as incisive as those which appeared in the *New Republic*, it too had an influential intellectual readership, and one may assume that the educational material - like the other content - of this journal was not without impact.

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[10] Letters from Dawson to Bourne, 12/14/14, 12/16/14, 12/21/14, (Bourne papers).

Thus by 1921, in the *Nation*'s fifty-sixth year and the *New Republic*'s seventh, the liberal journals had established themselves as profound and thoughtful critics of American politics, society, culture, and - of course - education. During the decade to follow they would never lack for opportunities to exercise their critical functions. But, as we shall see, even during the discouraging decade of the 1920's, they would find in the world of education forces and movements which would call forth their powers as advocates as well as critics.

PART III: LEAN YEARS FOR LIBERALS: 1921-1930

Chapter Seven: The Eclipse of Progressivism[1]

I

"Ring out the old; ring in something a little older." With these cheerless words the editors of the New Republic, in March 1921, greeted the inauguration of Warren G. Harding as President of the United States. America's other leading liberal weekly, the Nation, was equally disheartened at the prospect of four years - or more - of reaction. Its editors began their commentary on the Harding era by declaring:

> Forward, march - straight to the rear! This is the inaugural command of our new Commander-in-Chief, President Harding. We are not even to be allowed to stand still, but are to advance backwards just as rapidly as possible - to normalcy by way of stability.[2]

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[1] The chapter title is that given by Croly to a major editorial statement in the New Republic, 24 (10/27/20), 210-216.

[2] New Republic, 26 (3/2/21), 1; Nation, 112 (3/16/21), 389. Harding's inaugural rhetoric did not inspire confidence among the liberal journalists. In an editorial prefaced by the Biblical quotation, "Ephraim feedeth on wind," the New Republic damned Harding's emptiness and confusion by means of apt quotations from his own speech. They asked finally: "Why not acknowledge now . . . that to expect much from the author of this Inaugural is to be as unwisely optimistic about President Harding as President Harding is about the whole world?" 26 (3/16/21), 57.

But 1921 was not the beginning of disillusionment for the liberal weeklies - it was merely another check-point on the declining road from the heady progressive days of 1914. The _New Republic_ had had the ambiguous fortune to be launched in 1914 at the flood tide of the Progressive Movement. Since that time it had observed with horror the exposure of its original hero - Theodore Roosevelt - as a chauvinistic pseudo-progressive.[3] It had found a new hero in Woodrow Wilson and followed (and perhaps helped push) him into a war which accomplished few of the goals for which liberals supported it.

The _Nation_ had been equally discouraged by the events of the preceding years, but could afford to be perhaps a bit more self-righteous than the _New Republic_, in that it had been identified with fewer lost causes. In 1912 it had supported the victorious Wilson for President against Roosevelt and Taft, and it had firmly opposed America's entry into the first World War. But with these major exceptions, the two leading liberal journals were allied as observers of and participants in the national failure which characterized the post-war years. They had supported Wilson's professed hopes for a "peace without victory," and had then found it necessary to oppose the Versailles Treaty when it dashed such hopes. And in opposing the Treaty the liberal journalists had been chagrined to find themselves in a strange misalliance with some of America's most virulent conservatives.[4]

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[3] For an analysis of Roosevelt as "pseudo-progressive," cf. Daniel Aaron, _Men of Good Hope_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961, first published in 1951), ch. 8.

The Nation and the New Republic had resisted with little success the wave of reactionary hysteria which swept over the nation during the great Red Scare of 1919. They had refused the Hobson's choice of Harding or Cox which had been offered by the two major parties in 1920. Villard had quoted the statement that the choice was between "Debs or dubs" and had cast his vote for the Socialist candidate, Debs. It is a measure of Herbert Croly's estrangement from majoritarian politics that he had given his support to the almost unknown Farmer-Labor candidate, Parley P. Christensen.[5]

The liberal journals thus went into the years of the "Republican ascendancy" in a mood much less optimistic than that which they had felt in 1914. They were chastened not only by national failure but by their own - and by that of the liberal movement generally. But further bleak years lay ahead. What John Hicks has described as "the abject conservatism of the Harding-Coolidge era" was upon them.[6]

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[4] Cf. Wreszin, ch. 9.

[5] Editorial, "How Will You Vote?" Nation, 111 (9/4/20), 260; Croly, "The Eclipse of Progressivism," New Republic, 24 (10/27/20), 210-216. In this editorial article, Croly gave a useful capsule history of his political past, describing himself as "an American who called himself a reformer from 1890 to 1908, a Republican insurgent from 1908 to 1912, and since 1912 a progressive, and who shared most of the mistakes and illusions of the reformers, insurgents and progressives . . . ." (p. 215).

[6] The Republican Ascendancy is the title of John Hicks' excellent book on the 1921-1933 era. (New York: Harper, 1960). The quotation is from page 184.

II

Like most periods of American history, the 1920's have been interpreted and re-interpreted by historians, literary critics, social psychologists, and others.[7] Though there are many historical issues of the decade in which consensus is not [illegible] yet possible, there are certain broad areas of agreement on fundamental matters. Most historians are content to characterize the era as one of general but unsound prosperity (with the farmers as the most notable but not the only non-participants in this prosperity), and as one of undistinguished and short-sighted governmental leadership — at its worst, under Harding, corrupt and cynical; at its best, under Hoover, lacking in vision and flexibility.[8]

In the social, literary, and intellectual realms, historians have tended to see the era as one of a flight from responsiblity. Many intellectuals abandoned in disgust their fruitless efforts to reform society or to raise its standards of taste. Some dramatically expressed their alienation from American values by choosing to live and work in Paris or other European cities. An even larger number remained physically in

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[7] For a useful review of the varying interpretations of the period, cf. Henry May's article "Shifting Perspectives on the 1920's," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 42 (Dec., 1956), 405-27.

[8] For the most persuasive explanation of Hoover's failures as president, cf. Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York: Vintage, 1954; first published, 1948), ch. 11.

America, but became "internal expatriates" cutting themselves off deliberately from the interests and standards of most of their countrymen. Many in this group were among those who - as Norman Thomas said, - had "no illusions but one. And that is that they can live like Babbitt and think like Mencken."[9] Historians will continue to dispute about details and emphasis in their interpretations of the 'twenties, but most would agree that it was characterized by a decided swing away from the liberal enthusiasms of the preceding period. The most critical historiographical question to be considered here, however, is the one posed by Arthur Link in his article, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?"[10] It is clear that conservatism was in command nationally, but how powerful and effective was the liberal remnant? Link maintains that it had considerable influence, especially in Congress; that it was able to forestall some conservative legislation, such as the sale of Muscle Shoals to private interests; that it was able to enact some key progressive measures such as the 1928 Flood Control Act; and that finally - and ironically - much of the legislation passed by the conservatives themselves was in the progressive tradition.[11] This point of view is a useful corrective to the simplistic idea that liberalism went into complete hibernation during this decade.

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[9] Quoted in Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties (New York: Collier, 1962; first published in 1954), p. 378 n.

[10] Link, Arthur S., "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" American Historical Review, 64 (July, 1959), 833-51. William Leuchtenberg's judgment of Link's position - with which I concur - is that it is basically sound but over-stated. Cf. The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 278.

One who reads the liberal journals of the 1920's certainly has no doubts concerning the survival and vigor of progressivism. But it is clear also that the *Nation* and the *New Republic* played a different sort of role during this decade. Where they had once hovered close to the seats of power (as in the *New Republic*'s relationships with Roosevelt and Wilson), they were now completely estranged from the leaders of the country. Where they had once acted as occasional supporters and friendly critics of the "ins," they now found themselves in the position of backing (but still criticizing) the "outs." Where they had once found grounds for cautious optimism concerning the future, they now inclined towards a caustic pessimism.[12] Where politics had once seemed the major arena in which to promote progress and reform, now Croly, at least, took an increased interest in religion and education.[13]

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[11] Link fails to distinguish adequately between goal and method regarding progressive legislation. Several of the measures which he categorizes as "progressive," are such only in that they use collective governmental methods in carrying out their partially illiberal intentions (e.g. immigration restriction, prohibition). They represented, in fact, a reversion to Hamiltonian means for Hamiltonian ends.

[12] Cf. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Preface to "Decade One: 1914-1923," in *The Faces of Five Decades*, Robert B. Luce, ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 26.

Walter Weyl, in 1919, wrote a denunciation of "Tired Radicals."[14] This tag has been picked up and used by Norman Thomas, William Leuchtenberg and others to describe the journalists and publicists under study here, but the appellation is not entirely accurate. Villard, Croly, and their associates were not tired but were active, vigorous, and socially concerned. Indeed, it has been said of Villard, who edited the Nation from 1918-1932, that he "made more acres of public men acutely miserable, per unit of circulation, than any other editor alive."[15]

A fair assessment of the liberal journalists during this period would describe them not as tired radicals, but as more realistic liberals. Croly's last case of hero-worship occurred in early 1920, with Herbert Hoover as the object of political affection.[16] But this was a short-lived affair, and Croly became increasingly wary of attaching himself to individual politicians. He came to believe that the progressive success of the earlier era had been built on sand, and now proposed to go below the level of short-term effectiveness and build more solidly at a deeper level. In a 1922 editorial appropriately entitled "Sick of Politics," he wrote that "the chief function of the wise liberal during the next generation is to investigate the ability of individuals and groups to bring about an improved quality of human relations by other than political means." The other means which he had in mind were, as Schlesinger has indicated, "education, psychology, and finally perhaps religion."[17] Thus although the liberal journals of the 1920's were not politically dead, they were different, and their influence was consequently of a different nature. Instead of helping to define and refine a liberalism which was in power, they had to help build a liberalism fit to assume power. A case could well be made that such journals perform a more constructive function during periods of conservatism than during years of progress and reform. As Schlesinger, Jr. had indicated, the intellectuals represented by such journals play a useful role in coordinating unrest. And as Bruce Bliven (who succeeded Croly as editor) has written, "A paper like the *New Republic* is badly needed, if only to be the eggheads' Committee of Correspondence."[18]

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[13] For evidence on this shift in interest, cf. Croly's journalistic credo for the 1920's in "The New Republic Idea," New Republic, 33 (12/6/22), Part II; also Gentry, Liberalism, p. 181; Forcey, Crossroads, p. 304-5.

[14] Published posthumously in Weyl, Tired Radicals and Other Essays (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1921). Norman Thomas' use of the phrase is quoted in Hoffman, The Twenties, p.378n; Leuchtenberg used it as the title for chapter VII of The Perils of Prosperity.

[15] William Hard, in the Nation, v. 150 (1940), p. 158; quoted in Alan P. Grimes, The Political Liberalism of the New York Nation (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. ix.

[16] Cf. Forcey, Crossroads, pp. 299, 302, and references on p. 347.

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[17] "Sick of Politics," New Republic, 31 (6/7/22), 34; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Sources of the New Deal," in Paths of American Thought, edited by Schlesinger and Morton White (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), p. 379. Schlesinger overstates the case in his claim that "successive disenchantments had destroyed (Croly's) interest in politics." Croly was clearly less optimistic about social salvation through political action, but he continued to comment vigorously upon political developments.

III

It is clear that the liberal journals had an important - if rather new - mission to perform during the 1920's, but their degree of success in accomplishing it is nonetheless difficult to measure. One of the earliest histories of the 1914-1929 period concludes that the journalism of opinion probably had less influence than during the previous decade (1909-1913), the 'age of the muckrakers.'" Though this may well have been true of "journalism of opinion" in general, the *Nation* and the *New Republic* at least, were reaching a wider readership in the post-war decade. The combined circulation of the journals rose from approximately 25,000 in 1916 to over 65,000 in 1921. At no time during the 1920's did the total circulation of the two weeklies ever slip below 55,000, the figure for 1927.[19]

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[18] Schlesinger, Jr., *Paths of American Thought*, p. 375-6; Bruce Bliven, "The First Forty Years," in *New Republic, 40th Anniversary Issue*, 131 (Nov., 1954), 10.

[19] Preston W. Slosson, *The Great Crusade and After, 1914-1928* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 442; circulation figures are from N. W. Ayer and Son, *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer and Son, 1915-1930). For a rather poignant discussion of the financial difficulties of the liberal journals, see the letter from Oswald G. Villard to Jane Addams, Oct. 11, 1919 (Villard Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard).

Though it is difficult to gauge accurately the influence of the Nation and the New Republic on the liberal movement generally during the 1920's, it is somewhat simpler to assess the impact of the chief editors on their respective journals. During this decade the two weeklies continued to be in large part the personal journalistic expressions of Oswald Villard and Herbert Croly. These two men were similar in influence but very dissimilar in intellect and temperament.

Croly was a brilliant, original thinker - a scholar in journalism - but wrote slowly, painfully, and ponderously. Villard's ideas were more derivative, and he made no contributions to political thought comparable to Croly's Promise of American Life. Croly's thought was subtle, tentative, hypothetical, and pragmatic, while Villard (although he considered himself a pragmatist) was at the emotional level considerably more moralistic and dogmatic. Yet Villard was more professional as a journalist and wrote in a style much more readable than Croly's.[20]

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[20] For revealing personal descriptions of Croly, cf. the autobiographies of three former staff members: T. S. Matthews, Name and Address (New York: Simon and Schuster, [illegible]), pp. [illegible]-215; Robert Morss Lovett, All Our Years (New York: Viking Press, 1948), ch. 11. Alvin Johnson, Pioneer's Progress (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960 - first published in 1952) chapters 24-27. For Villard, cf. D. Joy Humes, Oswald Garrison Villard: Liberal of the 1920's (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1960), Grimes, Political Liberalism, p. 43 ff., and Wreszin, Chapters 7-12. Hicks has compared Croly to Villard as follows: "Less emotional than Villard, and considerably more philosophic in his approach to public problems, Croly was equally dedicated to the idea of reform." (The Republican Ascendancy, p. 35).

Croly's associates have described him as shy and withdrawn, while Villard was a vigorous and commanding figure who did a great deal of polemical public speaking and who gloried in the moral combat of his numerous causes. And finally, Villard was a thoroughgoing pacifist (in a nicely ironic phrase, Humes has noted his "violent hatred of war"), while Croly supported World War I and continued to insist that war could be justified under certain circumstances.[21] Yet, in spite of their divergent personalities, Croly and Villard served effectively during this period as editors of the two most influential liberal journals in America.[22]

The *Nation* had undergone its greatest recent transformation in 1918, when Villard assumed its editorship. Throughout the decade Villard crusaded with "infectious moral indignation" for the full range of liberal causes. He continued as editor until until 1932 and wrote a weekly column, "Issues and Men," for the journal until 1940.[23] While the *Nation* had changed rather abruptly when Villard took over, the *New Republic* was modified more gradually. Croly remained as editor until early 1930, although Bruce Bliven and George Soule assumed major responsibility for the journal after Croly's stroke in October, 1928.[24] But even while Croly continued as editor, there were changes in personnel and in philosophy. Randolph Bourne and Willard Straight both died in 1918 and Walter Weyl in 1919. Walter Lippmann resigned from the staff in 1921, as did Philip Littell in 1923. Alvin Johnson, who had become an editor in 1915, assumed in 1926 the more peripheral role of contributing editor.[25]

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[21] Villard's activist orientation was evident in the rationale he gave for abandoning his brief teaching career in history at Harvard. He declared that teaching was "like sitting in a club window and watching the world go by on the pavement outside." Quoted in Humes, *Villard*, pp. 8-9. (Villard's work in history at Harvard was done under Albert Bushnell Hart).

The quote is from Humes, *Villard*, p. 194. During 1920 Villard and Croly carried on a vigorous dispute on the relationship between pacifism and liberalism. Cf. *Nation*, 111 (11/3/20), 489; *New Republic*, 25 (12/8/20), 55-9.

[22] Villard's anonymous biographer in *Current Biography* has written that during the 1920's the *Nation* continued to have "a power far beyond its circulation." (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1940), pp. 831-2. Other liberal and radical journals which were active and influential during part or all of the decade were the Freeman, the New Masses, the Dial, and *LaFollete's Magazine*. Cf. Frederick Hoffman, *The Twenties*, ch. VII, "Critiques of the Middle Class"; also Slosson, *The Great Crusade*, p. 358 ff.

These changes in staff perhaps made it easier for Croly to execute the shift in emphasis from politics to culture, education, psychology, and religion which have been described above. His hope that political action might provide short cuts to reform atrophied. Thus while Villard met the challenge of the 1920's with an intensification of his earlier approach - with shrill, unyielding attacks on corruption and conservatism, Croly shifted his ground somewhat, and put his faith in a more subtle, long-range program of reform.

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[23] *Current Biography*, 1940, pp. 831-2. On the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nation*, Sinclair Lewis wrote for the occasion a "paraphrase of that greatest of poems, Tobacco is a Filthy Weed":

> The *Nation* is a yellow scold.
> I like it.
> It's subsidized by German* gold.
> I like it.
> It makes you hot, it makes you sore,
> It's either silly or a bore;
> It's all the things I most abhor -
> I like it.

*Also Bolshevik, Irish, and probably Haitian Gold. Cf. Lewis, "An American Views the Huns," *Nation*, 121 (7/1/25), 20.

[24] Gentry, pp. viii, 232.

[25] For a convenient summary of these and other staff changes, cf. Elmer D. Hood, "A Study of the Attitude of the *New Republic* on Foreign and Domestic Policies of the United States Between November, 1914, and March 3, 1933" (Master's Thesis, Rutgers University, 1949), pp. 1-9.

As one would expect, the changes in American politics and society, and in the Nation and the New Republic themselves, were reflected in the educational commentary carried by the journals during the 1920's. There are several questions concerning the interrelationships of liberal journalism and American education which deserve special attention during this period:

1) To what extent did education - broadly conceived - receive Croly's displaced enthusiasm for political action? Was the interest of the liberal journalists in worker education in part a product of this displacement?

2) In what ways did the climate of the 1920's force (or promote) a shift in educational concerns? Were the earlier interests in academic freedom, efficiency in education, and education for reform continued? What new educational issues concerned the journals, and what older questions received modified treatment?

3) On what educational issues did the liberal journals agree or disagree, and on what bases? To what extent can

differences in educational policy be ascribed to variations in broader social and political philosophy?

4) To what specific educational institutions, experiments, and studies, did liberal journalists give their time and attention? What effects - if any - did the journals or their personnel have upon educational developments during the period?

5) To what degree did the journals involve themselves in the "internal" educational disputes of the period? Did they ally themselves with either the scientific, reformist, or child-centered elements in progressive education described by Cremin?[26] Specifically, did Croly's move toward a more individualistic approach to reform have a corollary in an increased sympathy for child-centered movements in education?

6) Did the liberal journals - in their reaction against the traditional (and politically conservative) education express any sympathy for the anti-intellectual elements in progressive education? Specifically, was there any conflict between the intellectualism and the liberalism of these journals in regard to education?

7) If we accept Hofstadter's thesis that progressive education was often "immensely fertile and ingenious concerning means," but was confused about its goals, to what extent did liberal journals - as spokesmen for political progressives -

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[26] Cremin, Transformation, p. 288.

try to supply social goals for the new education?[27]

The chapters which follow will consider specifically the Nation's and the New Republic's treatment of the worker education movement, the child-centered schools, educational anti-intellectualism, and the various pressures on education during this period. This analysis, concluding with responses to the above questions, should deepen present understanding of American liberalism, its journalistic expression, and its general relationship with educational developments during the 1920's.

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[27] Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, p. 375. Morton White has coined the useful term "methodolatry" to describe Dewey's emphasis on scientific method; it can be equally well applied to some of the essentially goal-less excesses of child-centered progressive education. Cf. Social Thought in America (Boston: Beacon, 1957 - new edition), p. 253.

Garrison Villard would now assume responsibility for the magazine. The shift from Fuller to Villard represented a move from the

Chapter 8: A New Means for Liberals[1]

I

American liberals found little cause for optimism in the post-World War I era. If anything, the war had seemed to them to make the world *less* safe for democracy. It had revealed men to be more beastly and less rational than humanitarians had believed. The conflict and the Red Scare which followed demonstrated convincingly to liberal intellectuals that man was not yet able to live humanely and peacefully with his fellows.

As Croly saw it, the war was proof enough that man's current social arrangements - his family life, his social and economic structures, his educational processes - were not developing adequate human beings. He wanted liberals to re-examine the social environment, to correct weaknesses, and to support any social, political, and educational movements which seemed likely to rebuild civilization on a more humane basis. Croly and his colleagues desperately sought for positive trends, life-giving movements behind which they could throw their energies.[2]

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[1] "Adult Education: A New Means for Liberals," was Eduard C. Lindeman's title for the lead article of a special supplement on adult education which appeared in the *New Republic* in 1928; v. 54 (2/22/28), p. 26.

To the liberal journalists, one such hopeful trend in this era of disillusionment was the movement for adult - and specifically for worker - education. Adult education, in various forms and by different names, had, of course been a part of American life for many years.[3] Chautauquas, Lyceums, Americanization classes and correspondence schools had reached hundreds of thousands of American adults over the years. But after World War I adult education became more widespread, more varied, and more organized. Reformers, appalled at the ease with which America had been dragged into Europe's war, and dismayed at the nation's failure to work effectively for a just peace, saw the need for citizenship education for adults. And the same forces which imposed immigration restriction in 1917, 1921 and 1924 encouraged the growth of literacy education and Americanization classes for adults. By 1926, ventures in this field were substantial enough so that a national coordinating organization, the American Association for Adult Education, was formed.[4]

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[2] On Croly's drift away from politics, cf. his unpublished manuscript, *The Breach in Civilization* (Houghton Library, Harvard University); the most persuasive analysis of Croly's thought during this period was written by George Soule shortly after Croly's death: "Herbert Croly's Liberalism, 1920-28," *New Republic*, 63 (7/16/30), Part II, 253-7.

[3] For the history of adult education in America, see C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Adult Education* (New York: Association Press, 1955), chapter 12-23; also edited by the same author, *American Ideas About Adult Education, 1710-1951* (New York: Teachers College, 1959), Cf. also R. Freeman Butts and Lawrence Cremin, *A History of Education in American Culture* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1953), 408-10.

One of the newer departures within the broad field of adult education was that directed specifically to American workers. Workers' education, in the form of apprenticeship and vocational training, has had, of course, an exceedingly long and important history. But the type of workers' education which caught the attention of American liberals during this period went far beyond this narrow technical kind. It came to include --in varying proportions - education for union leadership, for social and political effectiveness, and for individual cultural development.

American workers' education of this broader type had roots - though tenuous ones - even in the pre-war period. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Vrooman, who - in association with Charles Beard and others - had helped found Ruskin College in Oxford, England, had also been, upon their return to America, instrumental in the development of a labor College in Trenton, Missouri. In 1906 the Socialists had opened the Rand School of Social Science in New York City. Both the *Nation* and the *New Republic* had commented favorably on the work of the Boston

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[4] Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge*, 279. For the relationship between movements for immigration restriction and those for assimilation (of which adult education was a major instrument), cf. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little Brown, 1951), ch. 11.

Trade Union College, founded in 1915.[5] But such ventures were isolated and fragmentary, and one cannot say that a real movement existed until the founding, with the help of Charles Beard, of the Workers' Educational Bureau in 1921.[6] This organization provided the impetus for further growth in this field. Through the usual means available to such a group - conferences, publications, conventions - the Bureau promoted workers' education as a significant method of social and industrial progress - indeed, as Eduard C. Lindeman pointed out, as "a new means for liberals."

From these small beginnings, the next decade saw a real expansion of workers' education. C. Hartley Grattan has written that "The nineteen-twenties appear very definitely to have been a period when new departures in workers' education were the order of the day, a current of intense seriousness in what is sometimes thought to have been a frivolous decade."[7] Nineteen twenty-one saw the founding of the Brookwood Labor College and the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers. The Labor Temple in New York City also instituted classes for workmen in that year.

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[5] Marius Hansome, "The Development of Workers' Education," ch. III of Workers' Education in the United States, Theodore Brameld, ed. (New York: Harper, 1941), 52-3; William L. Stoddard, "The Boston Trade Union College," Nation, 109 (8/30/19), 298-300.

[6] Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, p. 247.

[7] Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, p. 250.

II

One measure of growth in workers' education, and of liberal interest in it, may be taken from the pages of the Nation and the New Republic. From 1914 to 1918 the indices of these journals listed only two items under adult and workers' education. From 1918 through 1928 the Nation listed seventeen such articles, reviews and editorials, and the New Republic, thirty-eight. From 1928 through 1940 a sharp decline set in, and a total of only ten items were listed under these headings.[8]

How may one explain the growth and the new departures in workers' education during the 'twenties? In answering this question one may also find some of the reasons for the enthusiasm of the liberal journalists for the movement. It is important to note first of all that much American effort in this area was patterned on foreign - particularly British - antecedents.[9] Historians of American workers' education, including Theodore Brameld, Horace Kallen, and Adolph Meyer, have recognized the movement's indebtedness to the British example. Those vast forces of industrialization and urbanization which encouraged American workers' education had been felt -- and responded to - years earlier in Europe. And some labor leaders and intellectuals hoped that worker education might - in the European tradition - steer the American labor movement in a more class-conscious, politically active direction.[10]

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[8] These represent only those editorials, articles, and reviews which gave major attention to adult and worker education. Incidental references to these subjects were made in items dealing chiefly with other matters.

[9] Arthur Mann, "British Social Thought and American Reformers of the Progressive Era," provides excellent perspective on this influence. (Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLII (March 1956), 672-92). Cremin notes the indebtedness of the American university extension movement to British antecedents. (Transformation, pp. 165-6.)

Liberal journalists, British and American, wrote extensively on the British Workers' Education Association and labor colleges, both in terms of their effects in England and of their hoped-for impact on American labor and politics. As early as 1919, the *Nation* carried an article which explored in some detail the history, purposes, and methods of the W.E.A.[11] R. H. Tawney and Harold Laski, both *New Republic* contributing editors and both active in British workers' education, wrote articles explaining and promoting the British model of workers' education.[12]

But if England provided part of the pattern for American workers' education, unique American conditions provided the impetus for it. Much adult education had, as noted earlier, developed directly out of the movement for the Americanization of the immigrants.[13] The connection between Americanization and workers' education was particularly clear in the case of the classes sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. This union, dominated by first and second generation Jewish workers, developed - beginning with efforts to teach English and citizenship to its members - one of the most extensive and effective educational programs of any American labor organization.[14] Although no other union developed quite as intensive a program of citizenship and language training as did the I.L.G.W.U., some did try to provide similar opportunities for their members.

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[10] Theodore Brameld, ed., *Workers' Education in the United States: Fifth Yearbook of the John Dewey Society* (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 10; Adolphe E. Meyer, *An Educational History of the American People* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 359. Horace M. Kallen, *Education, the Machine and the Worker* (New York: New Republic, Inc. 1925), pp. vii-viii.

[11] Herbert W. Horwill, "The Education of the Adult Worker," *Nation*, 108 (5/10/19), 738-9. Horwill was the *Nation*'s London correspondent.

[12] R. H. Tawney, "Adult Education in England," *New Republic*, 40 (11/19/24), 292-3; Harold J. Laski, "On the Prospects of Adult Education," *New Republic*, 54 (2/22/28), 47-50.

Another impulse behind the development of labor education during the twenties was the growing recognition by unionists and their intellectual allies that new economic, social, and political conditions necessitated a broader role for the labor movement and a more effective leadership to promote this broader role. Just as the twenties were a discouraging decade for liberals in general, they were also, as Roger Daniels has written, "clearly the 'lean years' for the whole labor movement."[15]

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[13] Paul Sheats, Clarence Jayne, Ralph Spence, Adult Education - The Community Approach (New York: The Dryden Press, 1953), p. 3.

[14] Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge, p. 247.

[15] Roger Daniels, "Workers' Education and the University of California, 1921-1941," Labor History, 4 (Winter, 1963), 34. This is one of the few scholarly articles in the field of worker education.

After a period of dramatic growth during World War I, union membership fell following the recession of 1921-22. From a high of 5,000,000 members in 1921, union rolls dropped to fewer than 3,500,000 in 1929.[16] In a period of overt governmental hostility to labor and its causes, many union leaders saw the need to go beyond business unionism and to prepare workers for broader political and social action. James Maurer, Director of the Rand School, wrote in the Nation in 1922 that workers' schools were needed because of "the necessity of labor's having to deal with bigger and more complex issues than heretofore."[17]

An intriguing aspect of workers' education in this period is that unionists like Maurer and liberal intellectuals like Croly converged upon it from quite different directions. Representatives of labor saw that they had heretofore been too engrossed in collective bargaining and other parochial economic matters. They began to promote workers' education in the hope that - among other things - it would push labor toward a more effective political role, as had been the case in England.[18]

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[16] Richard B. Morris, ed., Encyclopedia of American History (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 525.

[17] James A. Maurer, "Labor's Demand for its Own Schools," Nation, 115 (9/20/22), 27[illegible]. A. J. Muste expressed a similar viewpoint: "The educational movement is becoming larger and more complex now simply because the unions have larger and more complex tasks to perform." Nation, 119 (10/1/24), 333.

[18] On the effects of workers' education in England, cf. W.H.G. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 192 ff.

Croly, however, turned to education in general - and workers' education in particular - partly out of disillusionment with the results of political action. In simplest terms, education was seen by some unionists as a means of making labor less narrowly economic, and by certain intellectuals as a way of making liberalism less narrowly political.

Both Croly and Villard were disenchanted with the major political parties, as was evidenced by their support of third party candidates during the 1920's. Both turned to labor as the growing edge of social progress, and hoped that revitalized unions might become the nucleus for a new political grouping. They shared Dewey's view that "organized labor should be a great force in social reconstruction."[19] It is not surprising, then, that liberal journalists should join their general interest in adult education and their hopes for the labor movement into a specific concern for workers' education.[20]

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[19] Dewey, "Labor Politics and Labor Education," *New Republic*, 57 (1/9/29), 213. Near the end of the decade, Dewey, Villard, Paul Douglas, and others attempted to force a realignment of American parties on more rational lines. They hoped that labor, farmers, intellectuals, and others might become the core of a new liberal political grouping. Cf.Karel Bicha, "Liberalism Frustrated: The League for Independent Political Action, 1928-1933," *Mid-America*, 48 (January, 1966), 19-28

[20] On this point see the editorial (presumably Croly's) regarding the preliminary stages in the formation of the American Association for Adult Education: "Adult Education," New Republic, 45 (11/25/25), 7-8. J. B. S. Hardman has written that after World War I "the progressives in the labor ranks and those of middle-class, intellectual background attempted to see some of their hopes carried into effect by way of workers' education. It looked at first as if it might work out." "The Challenge and the Opportunity," in Brameld, *Workers' Education*, p. 10. Cf. also Herbert E. Cory, *The Intellectuals and the Wage Workers; A Study in Educational Psychoanalysis* (New York: The Sunwise Turn, 1919). Cory

III

In giving their support to the nascent labor education movement, the liberal journals exposed a fundamental issue: should such education be an instrument of union goals alone, or should it be made the agent of broader social purposes? Intellectual support for union educational experiments was not without its price; it always involved the possibility that these benign outsiders would broaden, dilute, or divert the mainstream of labor's efforts in this area. A. J. Muste, the director of the Brookwood Labor School, expressed in the Nation his support for a workers' education movement which would "conceive of itself as an instrument being shaped by the trade unions for their own purposes."[21] But liberal journalists like Croly and Villard - not directly involved in the labor movement - claimed a broader perspective. Their support for any social program was contingent upon their belief that that program

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20 (continued) hoped that an alliance of farmers, "liberal journalists, and the rank and file of organized American labor" might become the cutting edge of reform. (p. 28). Education was to be a major instrument of this reform, and Cory saw the Gary Schools, as described by Bourne, as a hopeful and significant approach. (p. 249-50; 255-6). He was also influenced by Dewey's philosophical and intellectual views (pp. 95, 112, 119, 121, 269.

[21] A. J. Muste, "Workers' Education in the United States," Nation, 119 (10/1/24), 334. Even Muste, however, was not narrowly dogmatic on this issue. Cf. Marius Hansome, "The Development of Workers' Education," in Brameld, ed., Workers' Education, p. 59.

could serve as the agent of general social interests.[22]

The real issue here was, of course, the goal of workers' education. Such a burgeoning movement was bound to attract a variety of adherents, each hoping to make it the vehicle of his particular purposes. This was an open issue on which the journals were not prepared to promote a particular dogma; various writers for the Nation and the New Republic gave different emphases to individual, union, political, and cultural goals. As a 1921 editorial in the New Republic put it, "the old conflict between cultural and utilitarian ends is waged as violently in the workers' colleges as in the orthodox educational institutions of the country." This same editorial raised the fundamental question of "Whether the conception of a class struggle should be accepted or not" in workers' education classes.[23]

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[22] Soule has noted that during the 1920's Croly "advised progressives to approach closer to and support labor. And he defined the support which he favored by a characteristic group of adjectives - 'candid, discriminating and loyal.'" In the same article Soule reported that groups such as labor which "at one moment would feel warmed by his support would soon be cooled by his inveterate necessity to qualify and criticize." Cf. New Republic, v. 63, p. 236. Croly's basic commitment is evident in the following: "As liberals we cannot, like conservatives or doctrinaire revolutionaries, put esprit de corps and party loyalty above loyalty to the cause of truth." Editorial reply to Dewey's defense of J. H. Robinson's "Mind in the Making." New Republic, 31 (6/7/22), 48. This discussion should not be read to imply that men like Maurer, Muste, and Spencer Miller Jr. were unconcerned about general public goals. But they sometimes found it necessary to protest - as Muste does in the article cited - against actual or threatened "outside" manipulation of labor education programs.

[23] Editorial (probably Croly's), "Workers' Education," New Republic, 28 (10/12/21), 174.

C. Hartley Grattan, one of the historians of adult education, has pointed out that there is a "fairly long tradition of educational activity on the 'left' where social reform gets badly mixed up with ideological particularism."[24] The danger of getting thus "badly mixed up" was a real one for labor educators and their liberal allies. But reformist goals for workers' education were pulled in other directions as well. Besides feeling the politico-ideological tug from the left, they were subject to technical, short-term, business unionist pressures from the right, while individualistic, cultural aims were urged upon them from the sidelines by some of their intellectual allies.[25]

Arthur Gleason joined several of these issues - and oversimplified them - for *New Republic* readers in his approving statement that "some of the American workers are demanding that education directly feed the life of the union. This is different from a disinterested culture quest and from a propagandist drive."[26] With the issue stated in such pejorative terms few liberals were so narrow as to defend either culture or propaganda as overriding goals for workers' education. But writers for the journals were willing to propose stronger elements of both for labor schools. Jean Flexner, while approving the general orientation of Muste's Brookwood Labor College, was critical of the unrelieved "purposive atmosphere of the place." She asked New Republic readers:

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[24] Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge*, 245.

[25] On this point cf. the quotation from Fannia Cohn in "Workers' Education," (reviews by Evans Clark of three books on this subject), *Nation*, 113 (12/7/21), 673; also James Maurer, "Labor's Demand for its Own Schools," *Nation*, 115 (9/20/22), 276-8.

[26] Arthur Gleason, "Workers' Education in the United States," *New Republic*, 34 (3/28/23), 143. (This was a review of the *Proceedings* of the second national conference of the Workers' Education Bureau).

> . . . Is it consistent with labor's social ideals and ultimate goal that this education should be concerned only with production, distribution, and organizational activity - not with consumption and enjoyment of the things to be produced?

She proposed that Brookwood "season life" with such non-utilitarian subjects as music, drama, literature, and art.[27]

But men like Arthur Gleason, activists in workers' education, felt that such "frills," however desirable, would have to wait:

> Workers' education will probably continue to be a pretty practical affair, as long as enormous masses of workers are unorganized, as long as great unions, like the 'Miners,' can be scabbed in the richest coal districts . . . . The American labor movement is young in an annoying world. American workers' education therefore will probably be militant rather than cultural, for a generation or two.[28]

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[27] Jean Atherton Flexner, "Brookwood," New Republic 43 (8/5/25), 288-9. Miss Flexner was the daughter of the influential educator Abraham Flexner.

[28] Gleason, New Republic, v. 34, p. 143. A similar position was taken by A. J. Muste, who held that those who advocated cultural education in labor schools were "attacking the worker's problem at its circumference rather than at its center." (Nation, v. 119, p. 334). Gleason's statement is reminiscent of John Adams' 1780 statement of priorities: "I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, commerce and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music and architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain." Adams' letter to wife, quoted by Michael Straight in "Something for the Arts," New Republic, 152 (3/13/65), 11.

In both journals the pattern seemed to be for the "insiders" - unionists and others directly involved in workers' education - to promote education for short-term union goals and to postpone culture and "uplift"; the "outsiders" and critics begrudgingly accepted the need for this as a temporary expedient, but hoped that the time might soon come when workers' education classes could move away from the purely utilitarian end of the instructional continuum.[29]

IV

Thus there was in the journals a dialogue on the "culture vs. utility" issue. But on the question of education vs. propaganda there was considerably less difference of opinion. Most writers for the journals followed the line set forth by the New Republic in 1923, rejecting ideological propaganda from the left and business unionist dogma from the right. In an editorial (presumably Croly's) on "The Object of Workers' Education," the editors aligned themselves with those "who discriminate sharply between education and propaganda." They criticized the Garland Fund for supporting only a "radical program" which would - in the words of its trustees - "instill into the workers the knowledge and the qualities which will fit them for carrying on the struggle for the emancipation of their class. . . ." But they were even more forceful in their denunciation of Samuel Gompers for his "silly and contemptible" attack on the Fund.[30] Where the Garland Fund (headed by Roger Baldwin) could not transcend the interests of the working class, Gompers and his myopic cronies could not see beyond the short-term interests of the conservative American Federation of Labor.

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[29] Eduard C. Lindeman, a New Republic contributing editor, wrote that "adult education, whenever it endures long enough to pass through the 'bread and butter' stage, invariably evolves toward cultural ends." The Meaning of Adult Education (New York: New Republic Inc., 1926), p. 99. This was one in the series of New Republic dollar books, several of which dealt with adult and workers' education.

This attempt to call down a curse upon both houses (typical of these journals which were still trying to stay in Lippmann's middle ground "between Manchester and Marx") did not go unchallenged. Norman Thomas, a trustee of the Garland Fund, questioned the editors' emphasis on a disinterested, autonomous role for labor education, and asked: "Is not education a legitimate instrument" of class emancipation? Like the editors, Thomas wished to preserve the distinction between education and propaganda. But he warned against the often pointless activities which are often carried on under the name of education. In so doing he retold the story of the American woman who had "hung in reverence upon every word that fell from the lips of G. B. Shaw. This eager convert was supposed to have said:

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[30] Editorial, "The Object of Workers' Education," New Republic, 34 (4/25/23), 229.

> Oh! Mr. Shaw, how I love that man! He is the man that made me think. Think, think what? Think? Oh, nothing particular, only Wonderful, Beautiful, Eternal, Thought, Thought, Thought.[31]

The issue which Thomas raised may have been more apparent than real. Certainly none of the liberal journalists proposed programs which might lead to the vapid emptiness characteristic of Shaw's admirer. Rather, they insisted on workers' education programs which adhered to standards of scientific method and objective truth. Thus the editors of the Nation commended the policy statement issued in 1921 by the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers: "The School shall not be committed to any dogma or theory, but shall conduct its teaching in a broad spirit of impartial inquiry, with absolute freedom of discussion and academic freedom of teaching."[32]

With this concern both for truth and for the interests of the workers, it was perhaps inevitable that someone among this group of good Deweyan pragmatists should feel impelled to resolve the dilemma by creating a category inclusive of both propaganda and free inquiry. James Maurer did just that in declaring in 1922 that the purpose of a labor school was "propaganda for sound, independent thinking." And that he added, with well-founded suspicion, "is radical enough to condemn it in the opinion of certain interests."[33]

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[31] Norman Thomas, Letter, New Republic, 34 (5/9/23), 296.

[32] Editorial note, Nation, 112 (4/13/21), 527.

[33] Maurer, Nation, v. 115, p. 278.

What the liberal journalists were proposing for the workers' education movement was a role much like their own - friendly to unionism, allied with it as a social force, but not irrevocably tied to specific organizations or factions within it. Workers' education - like liberal journalism - should be removed enough from deep involvement in union politics so it could provide labor with much-needed criticism and perspective. Croly was particularly outspoken on this point. He vigorously resisted the tendency of labor to "subordinate education, just as so many governments have done and as so many ruling classes would like to do, to the aggrandizement of class interest and power." He supported those workers' education programs which would train leaders capable of "transcending a merely pugnacious psychology and a sectarian program." For him, education was "an independent and precious social activity with which a non-revolutionary social agitation did not need and could not afford to tamper."[34]

This was an essentially Deweyan conception of education as an instrument of social goals - yet as more than an instrument. Education grew out of social needs, but could transcend its origins and develop goals of its own broader than those of the institutions which supported it. With this inclusive view of education it is not surprising that liberal journalists resisted the tendency of workers' education to become exclusive - to find its support only within the unions or, even worse, within particular labor groupings.

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[34] Unsigned editorial, New Republic, v. 34, p. 230. The *Nation*'s editors expressed ~~a similar~~ hope that workers' education might "lift enough of the workers above the noise and dust of the strife of trade unions for advantage and of factions for power, and enable them to see what must be done for the sake of that future of which labor should be the chief builder . . . ." Editorial, "Is Labor a Lost Hope?" *Nation*, 118 (2/20/24), 196.

Thus in 1921 the New Republic declared that because of different opinions concerning goals and methods it was a "wholesome sign that workers' education is at the same time being undertaken under auspices other than those of the trade unions themselves."[35] The Nation's enthusiasm for joint union-university ventures such as the Bryn Mawr Summer School denotes a similar outlook, and near the end of this period, in 1928, the New Republic reaffirmed this position in a cause célèbre of the workers' education movement - that of Brookwood Labor College vs. Mathew Woll and the A. F. of L. The conservative leaders of the A. F. of L. apparently found Brookwood too radical, too critical, and too independent to merit their further support. But the Federation's withdrawal of financial aid to the College brought forth from John Dewey in the pages of the New Republic a withering three-page attack on this "scholastic lynching." Dewey took particular aim at Matthew Woll, an old-line business unionist, who was instrumental in pushing through the cut-off of funds.

In his article - which was supported by a New Republic article in the same issue - Dewey rejected the charge that Brookwood was propagandizing, condemned the "inert character of the present labor movement," and vigorously argued the need for autonomous institutions like Brookwood. He declared that such labor schools "should train leaders who think independently and should thereby help in ushering in a social order free from exploitation."[36] They should, in short, fulfill the reformist function which Dewey advocated for all educational institutions.

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[35] New Republic, v. 28, p. 174.

One could, of course, pass this dispute off as something of a "tempest in a teapot." Brookwood was a small school which probably had little permanent impact on the American labor movement, and the issue under discussion was but one event in its history. But regardless of the effects of this particular clash between Dewey and Woll, it does provide a specific case study demonstrating the liberal journalists' support for independent, critical workers' education not beholden to specific unions or to particular factions within unions.

It is evident to the reader of the Nation and the New Republic that the journals' editors and writers, in their attention to worker education, were particularly interested in the goals and effects of the movement, and with the institutional support behind it. Their concern for the internal workings of labor schools - with teachers, students, and methodology - was expressed less often, but took an interesting twist. Journal comment in this area was usually highly favorable, praising labor education for its sense of relevance, its realsim, and for its progressive methodology, and it often made its point more strongly through invidious comparisons with effete, traditional, middle-class education. Such comparisons can be found in the Nation as early as 1919, when Herbert Horwill lauded the British Workers' Educational Association as presenting "a spectacle of intellectual energy and enthusiasm which finds no parallel among the leisure classes."[37] Jean Flexner, in the American context, was even more specific:

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[36] Dewey, "Labor Politics," 211-14. Cf. also the New Republic editorial in support of Dewey's position: "The Federation and Mr. Woll,": 57 (1/9/29), 205-6; also an editorial paragraph reaffirming the position four months later: 58 (5/8/29), 317. For background on this issue, cf. Daniels, Labor History, v. 4, p. 43. The New Republic had evinced a suspicion of A. F. of L. influence on workers' education also in 1925 when the Federation assumed greater control of the Workers' Education Bureau. The editors declared: "Whether education, meaning the training of critical faculties of mind, will find a more liberal shelter under the A. F. of L. than under any of the other groups, remains to be demonstrated." Editorial note, New Republic, 42 (4/29/25), 249.

> The Brookwood student can be most simply described by contrasting him with the undergraduate in the 'bourgeois' college - the inexperienced, amiable, impressionable dilettante, who drifts with open and colorless mind through a kaleidoscope of courses to emerge without deep convictions or definite objectives.[38]

The New Republic, in pointing to the same phenomenon, gleefully reported the stimulation felt by a teacher of working girls in contrast with the despair experienced in instructing the "somnolent daughters of plutocracy." The editors concluded that there was less of a problem in educating the masses than in enlightening the "great sodden middle class."[39]

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[37] Horwill, "The Education of the Adult Worker," 739.

[38] Flexner, New Republic, v. 43, p. 288.

This enthusiasm for the apparent liveliness, relevance, and psychological soundness of workers' education is hardly surprising. Unions and their educational allies were conducting their classes (perhaps more out of necessity than out of intellectual conviction) on progressive Deweyan lines. The liberal journalists - most of whom were Dewey's disciples in educational matters - were thus pleased to see his theories receive practical validation. Deweyan rhetoric runs through journal commentary on labor education during this period. Eduard C. Lindeman, for example, praised C. D. Burns' *The Philosophy of Labor* for its recognition that labor education might become "the force which will evoke, clarify, and instrumentalize the worker's point of view." Two years later he wrote in reference to the whole adult education movement that "liberalism can become effective only when it derives from a valid learning process which is continuous, co-terminous,with life itself."[40]

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[39] Editorial,"Adult Education," *New Republic*, 45 (11/25/25), 8. This same editorial noted that "more than one teacher in workers' education evening classes. . . has testified that he has received as much as he has given. If the men lack the intellectual discipline and knowledge of the subject he has, he lacks the direct observation of practical operation they have." Evans Clark wrote in the *Nation* that "an ounce of professorial energy produces ten times more cerebration per student at the Rand School than at Princeton." "Workers' Education," 670. Clark was the husband of *Nation* staff member (and later editor) F. Kirchway.

[40] Lindeman, "Labor's Outlook to Life," *New Republic*, 48 (8/25/26), 22; "Adult Education," *New Republic*, 54 (2/22/28), 28.

The Deweyan influence was particularly evident in the case of Herbert Croly. Shortly after Croly's death in 1930, George Soule wrote an appreciation of him which makes it clear that Croly shared with Dewey the conviction that education was more than a simple matter of transmitting information; rather, it was a process of expanding the range of meanings which people attach to experience. According to Soule, Croly held that "it was useless merely to preach people into acceptance of articles of faith. People could be convinced and vitalized only through interpretation of their own experience." He quoted Croly's assertion that adults needed to regain "both their craving for experience and their ability to attach meanings to it."[41]

Dewey was himself, of course, a contributing editor of the New Republic, and through its pages expressed his views on political and educational issues, including workers' education. But his progressive, pragmatic spirit was evident also in editorials and articles on labor education by Croly, Villard, Maurer, Muste, Kallen, Lindeman, and others.[42] Such men saw that the new pedagogy was particularly applicable to adult and workers' education partly because adults had more experience to interpret. Workers particularly did not need to be inducted into social, economic, and political reality - this they already felt and knew. What they needed was the opportunity - which workers' education provided them - to interpret this reality with the aid of psychology, history, and other disciplines.[43] The relationship of learning and life - of school and society - was very real in workers' education, and it is clear that the closeness of this relationship accounts for much liberal intellectual enthusiasm for the movement.

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[41] Soule, New Republic, v. 63, pp. 255-6. Gentry maintains that Croly was, over the years, increasingly influenced by Dewey. ("Liberalism," p. 63). Croly's study under William James at Harvard may well have prepared the intellectual ground for his acceptance of Deweyan pragmatism. Cf. Forcey, Crossroads, pp. 16-22.

[42] Kenneth Benne holds that Dewey's influence "seems to have been equally great among progressive workers in the education of adults as among workers in the education of children and young people." "John Dewey and Adult Education," Adult Education Bulletin, XIV (Oct., 1949). Villard's great respect for Dewey was indicated in a letter which he wrote to Henry Linville: "I do not think there is any honor too high that can be paid to John Dewey. His seventieth birthday ought to be made a national event . . . . " Letter, 3/23/29, in Villard papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

VI

The workers' education movement of the 1920's may be seen, then, as one particular expression of the pragmatic impulse in education. As interpreted by liberal journalists, it was reformist in its goals, Eclectic in its institutional support, and progressive in its methods. It was thus entirely logical that Croly, Villard, and their colleagues should give the movement their support and their criticism. But in a rather fundamental way the association of liberal journalists with workers' education differed from their relationship with the progressive education of children and youth. In the latter area they functioned largely as critics; their involvement with elementary and secondary education was somewhat limited and generally indirect.

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[43] The curriculum of labor education tended to emphasize the social sciences. Will Durant, for example, in a letter concerning the Labor Temple School (of which he was director) reported that the institution would "aim to acquaint the student with the sciences that most directly concern the development and direction of human affairs." *New Republic*, 28 (10/12/21), 192.

But adult and workers' education was different in that liberal journalists had something to offer; here they could become directly involved. Thus we find Croly taking an active part in the founding of the New School for Social Research (some of the organizational meetings were held at the *New Republic* offices), and giving particular emphasis to the Labor Research Bureau which was associated with it.[44] Alvin Johnson, a *New Republic* editor in the early twenties, and a *Nation* editor in the 1930's, was the second director of the New School, succeeding James Harvey Robinson. George Soule, who wrote for both the *New Republic* and the *Nation* (and who later became a *New Republic* editor) taught at Will Durant's Labor Temple School. Carl Van Doren, literary editor of the *Nation*, was a member of the same faculty. R. H. Tawney, H. N. Brailsford, and Harold Laski - all *New Republic* contributing editors during the 1920's - were among the most influential leaders of the British workers' education movement. And of course Eduard C. Lindeman, who was one of America's leading adult educators during this period, and who directed research for the Workers' Education Bureau, was a contributing editor of the New Republic.[45] This last could be extended almost indefinitely, but the point is evident: in the area of workers' education, the liberal journalists were, in Croly's phrase, "participating agents who were also observers."[46]

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[44] Gentry, "Liberalism," pp. 188-9; Cf. Alvin Johnson, *Pioneer's Progress*, for the roles of Croly, James H. Robinson, Charles Beard, and Dorothy Straight in the founding and early history of the New School. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960; first published, 1952), ch. 27.

In view of this active involvement in workers' education, how may one explain the declining attention given to it in the liberal journals after 1928? For the New Republic, Croly's death in 1930 provides part of the answer. His direct, personal concern for adult and workers' education was not felt to the same degree by the members of the editorial board who succeeded him. But even had Croly lived, it is probable that the New Republic, like the Nation, would have shown a less active interest in workers' education. In 1929 the Great Depression struck; liberal journalists, along with other liberal spokesmen, felt that the vast and overpowering economic problems facing the nation could not wait for the slow solutions provided by education. And with the victory of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, immediate political action seemed even more relevant. During the 1920's much liberal political action had seemed futile; now, at long last, progress in this realm was possible. Liberal journalists could again feel that — as in the days of Theodore Roosevelt and the pre-war Wilson - they had a significant relationship to power. In simplest terms, as the journals' political interests again climbed, their educational interests declined.

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[46] Croly, Introduction to Lindeman's Social Discovery (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1924), p. xvi.

A further explanation lies in the shifts which took place in the union movement itself. Following the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 and the Wagner Act in 1935, unions grew rapidly in membership and in influence. While continuing, and in some cases expanding, workers' education programs, most unions now gave them a lower order of priority. Labor began to experience considerable success in politics and at the bargaining table; it learned that such progress need not wait for the results of workers' education programs. Thus while workers' education expanded in absolute terms, its relative significance - both to unionists and to their intellectual allies - declined.[47] In short, the workers' education movement of the 1920's - and the enthusiasm for it displayed by liberal journalists - were to a considerable degree the product of failure in the political and economic realms. When this pattern of failure was reversed, workers' education became a more peripheral concern both for labor and for liberal intellectuals.

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[47] C.I.O. Unions gave considerable attention to worker education following the split from the A.F. of L. in 1935. Among the few examples of journal comment on worker education during the 1930's, cf. New Republic, 93 (12/22/37), 186; also Nation, 140 (4/24/35), 476-8.

Chapter Nine: The New Education[1]

I

During the first few years of the New Republic's history, Randolph Bourne had served as the journal's unofficial education editor.[2] In this role he had written a number of perceptive analyses of American education - both "horror stories" of the old formalistic schools and hopeful reports on some of the newer scholarly developments.[3] After Bourne's death in 1918, the person who came closest to performing the same role for the journal was Agnes de Lima. Mrs. de Lima, unlike Bourne, was an educator, but she shared Bourne's ability to look at school situations with a detached and critical perspective.

Mrs. de Lima was, in fact, a close friend of Bourne's, and a part of the same radical group which congregated in

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[1] This was the title given to the articles in the Nation by Evelyn Dewey and Agnes de Lima: v. 118, p. 702; v. 112, p. 684.

[2] Lawrence Grauman, "Tough Case, Tough Guy," (Review of The World of Randolph Bourne, edited by Lillian Schlissel), New Republic, 152 (5/15/65), 28.

[3] Cf. Parts I and II above.

Greenwich Village before and during the first World War. Bourne was in love with Esther Cornell, an actress with whom Mrs. de Lima lived, and de Lima and Cornell cared for him in their home during his final illness.[4] There is a great deal of continuity between the educational thought of Bourne and that of de Lima - no doubt partly because of their personal association, but probably more significantly out of their immersion in the same pragmatic, reformist, and esthetic milieu.

During the 1920's Mrs. de Lima wrote a large number of articles and book reviews not only for the New Republic, but for the Nation as well. While she was not a regular, salaried contributor to the New Republic as Bourne had been, there was an informal understanding that the pages of the journal were open to her when she wished to write an article. Mrs. de Lima was a close associate of Alvin Johnson's, and sometimes attended New Republic staff luncheons with him, Croly, and the other editors.

In spite of the educational reforms of the previous decade, Mrs. de Lima had no difficulty finding during the 1920's school conditions quite similar to those described by Bourne in the first issue of the New Republic. In the spring of 1924 she visited a fourth grade class in a New York City public school and reported her impressions to readers of the New Republic:[5]

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[4] Interview with Agnes de Lima by author, November 18, 1965. Bruce Bliven, Alvin Johnson, and Freda Kirchwey have all attested to de Lima's importance as an education writer for the journals. (Interviews respectively on 8/28/65, 11/17/65, 11/19/65).

> The teacher's voice was hard and metallic and her face lined with a multitude of little seams of nervous irritation. Police duty is hard work, when it means keeping forty-six children caged and immovable in a tiny room five hours a day, five days a week for ten months a year . . . .
>
> . . . . In this cramped and arid space was not one thing to call forth the slightest creative impulse of the children who were doomed by law to spend the sunniest hours of their lives there. All they could do was to sit up rigid and "tall," while the teacher doled out irrelevant and uninviting bits of knowledge in the name of "education."

Most disturbing, of course, was the impact of this situation on the children. They were "frozen into immobility" . . . "sunk in apathy, not one of them by even so much as a shuffle venturing to rebel openly against the accustomed regime." Mrs. de Lima described one scene which might have come straight out of Dickens' Hard Times. One of the students was asked to recite a poem:

> Thomas, thin and undersized, one eye twitching nervously, shrieked the verses in his tense treble. The contrast was cruel between his misshapen little frame and the words of the poem. "In-to the sunshine full of de-light. . . . he halted miserably.
>
> "Go ahead," prodded Miss Perkins. Thomas stood his ground a moment in a desperate search

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[5] The quotations following are from this article, "Any School Morning," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24), 19-20. The author reported that "both school and class were selected at random, the visitor merely choosing the first school she happened to come across after going into an unfamiliar part of town."

> for the next line, then crumpled into his
> place.
> "Next boy!" "Next boy" began the poem . . . .[6]

II

The educational problems exposed by Mrs. de Lima in this dramatic, impressionistic fashion were summarized in a more systematic - if less forceful - way by other writers for the liberal journals. William B. Curry reminded *Nation* readers in 1929 that

> Progressive educators have criticized conventional education on the grounds that its methods are too much like those of a factory, that its psychology is not sufficiently subtle and, therefore, pays too little attention to the individual peculiarities of children, that its curriculum is stereotyped and formal, that it gives too little opportunity for spontaneity and initiative, and that such forms of self-expression as art, handicrafts, and music are grossly neglected.[7]

Even educational experiments like the Gary Plan - which Bourne had supported so vigorously - were now under attack. Margaret Haley reported to *New Republic* readers in 1924 that groups of teachers in Milwaukee and Chicago had "declared the platoon school unsound educationally because it emphasizes the teaching of subject matter rather than the teaching of children."[8]

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[6] A similarly impressionistic account of school life, emphasizing teacher-administrator relationships, followed this article: Leonora Pease, "Enter the Superintendent," *New Republic*, 40 (11/12/24), 21

[7] William B. Curry, "New Ways With Children," (review of Margaret Naumberg's *The Child and the World*), *Nation*, 128 (4/2/29), 510

Journal readers were reminded that such forces as the pressure of enrollment were also requiring a reexamination of existing educational philosophies and methods. In 1923, the New Republic published a twenty-seven page supplement entitled "The American High School," - a multi-faceted examination of this educational phenomenon, with articles by George Counts, Charles Judd, Carelton Washburne, and other outstanding educators. The lead article, by Alexander Inglis of Harvard, stated that between 1890 and 1923 the number of secondary schools had climbed from under 3000 to more than 14,000 and that enrollment had soared from about 300,000 to more than 2,000,000 students. Many of these new students - and even more of the large numbers attending elementary schools - came from backgrounds in which formal academic work was a strange and unknown world.[9]

From within the schools, then, pressures were building up not only for a break with traditional instruction, but for a re-definition of progressive education. And educators were responding to forces beyond the school as well - to new interpretations of individual and social need, and to new developments in psychology. Where the dominant emphasis of educational comment in the journals during the Wilson era had been upon the effect of education upon the individual.

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[8] Margaret Haley, "The Factory System," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24), 18.

[9] Alexander Inglis, "The High School in Evolution," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23, Part II), 1.

Thus Eduard C. Lindeman noted in the New Republic in 1926 that "the newest sociology is individual, not social, in emphasis," and credited behaviorism and abnormal psychology with this "individualizing of the social sciences."[10] And Margaret Naumberg, an exponent of Jungian analytic approaches to education, took it upon herself to attack the dominant social emphasis in the psychology and pedagogy identified with Dewey. She saw the need for an individualistic reaction against the group orientation which she feared was smothering artistic and creative impulses:

> Just because America is so group-minded, any questioning as to the positive value of this constant and limited herd life is sure to be a source of irritation. We are still so imbued with a purely group psychology, so completely identified with mass action and reaction, that it is not possible even for our leaders to be aware how typically American this is. Unable to see ourselves as others do, we can scarcely expect to realize how deeply our group ways separate us from the crystallized individualism of Europe.[11]

The psychoanalytic orientation which lay behind much of Miss Naumberg's work was felt widely throughout American society during the 1920's - not least so in the child-centered schools. Lippmann, one of the original New Republic editors, had utilized Freudian insights as early as 1913 in his Preface to Politics and in articles for the New Republic. Malcolm Cowley reports that during the first World War "young women all over the country were reading Freud and attempting to lose their inhibitions." Analytic ideas which began to penetrate the American mind after Freud's visit to the United States in 1909 found a fertile field during the 1920's. In literature, art, social work, political analysis, and in education, Freudianism directed attention to the emotive, non-rational springs of human behavior.[12]

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[10] Eduard C. Lindeman, "Education: The Antidote for Social Disorders," (review of books by Ernest Groves and John Lapp), New Republic, 47 (7/28/26), 285.

[11] Margaret Naumberg, "The Crux of Progressive Education," New Republic, 63 (6/25/30), 145. For background on Miss Naumberg and her divergence from Deweyan pedagogy, cf. Robert Beck, "Progressive Education and American Progressivism: Margaret Naumberg," Teachers College, 60 (January 1959), 198-208.

Given this confluence of forces from inside and outside the schools, it is not surprising that many progressive educators of the 1920's began to give more attention to the individual - to his own needs, desires, and impulses - and less to the socially reformist elements of education.[13] Nor is it surprising that the leading liberal journals should take note of this trend, subject it to their usual critical analysis, and support those aspects of it which coincided with their own current interpretations of individual and social need.

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[12] For Lippmann on Freudianism, cf. "Freud and the Layman," New Republic, 2 (4/17/15, Part II), 9-10. The quotation is from Cowley's Exile's Return (New York: Viking, 1951), p. 23. Cremin has an excellent section of Freudianism in The Transformation of the School, pp. 207-15. Cf. Also Jewell Vincent, "Some Influences of Sigmund Freud on the 1920's in the United States," The Southern Quarterly, 2 (Jan., 1964), 138-49.

[13] Cremin has noted that the 1920's provided particularly fertile ground for the growth of child-centered education. Cf. Transformation, pp. 201 ff; also Willis Rudy, Schools in an Age of Mass Culture (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), p. 300.

III

This topic may perhaps best be approached by taking a "reader's-eye-view." To the regular reader of the *Nation* or the *New Republic* - normally a liberal, intelligent professional person - what view of child-centered education was communicated? What definition of this branch of progressive education could be constructed from the editorials, articles, and reviews which appeared in the journals? What particular schools and experiments were brought to his attention? To what range of opinion (including editorial opinion) on this topic was he exposed? What criticisms of the movement were brought to his attention? This "reader's-eye-view" of educational trends will permit consideration of a further basic question: to what extent, if any, did the Nation or the New Republic promote the anti-intellectual elements which have been noted in child-centered education by Cremin, Hofstadter, and Lasch?[14]

Readers of the liberal journals probably never received a comprehensive definition of child-centered education - and, given the variety within the movement - perhaps one was not possible. Instead they received descriptions of specific child-centered schools and contrasts with traditional educational institutions. Thus Alvin Johnson provided in the *New*

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[14] Cf. Cremin, Transformation, p. 210 ff; Richard Hofstader, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1963), chapters 13 and 14; Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America* (New York, 1965), pp. 12-15.

Republic in 1923 an enthusiastic commentary on Margaret Naumberg's Walden School (formerly the Children's School). He noted that in such a school,

> Self-expression and self-direction must be the basis of the educational scheme. . . .
> Naturally there is no room in Miss Naumberg's scheme of instruction for the textbook, the set task, the rigid standard . . . . Work and play are woven together, and the teacher's part is the same in one as in the other, that of moderator to restrain the excesses of conflicting personalities, of expert in determining uncertain values, of guide through intricacies encountered by immature minds. The Walden teacher often leads but never drives.[15]

Readers of the *Nation* received similarly enthusiastic reports on trends in progressive education in Agnes de Lima's 1924 series entitled "The New Education." Mrs. de Lima defined three kinds of educational reformers: The first group was made up of "technicians, most of whom accepted an established body of knowledge," but who made extensive use of tests and methodological schemes for teaching it more effectively. The second group was socially-oriented, "demanding modern schools to fit children to play a worthy part in the modern world." The third saw education as "an organic process which changes and develops as the child himself changes and grows."[16] It is clear from the tone of her third article that she saw the organic, child-centered school as a distinct advance over the other two. In this article she described the City and Country School as based on behaviorist psychology and the Walden School on psychoanalytic assumptions, and reported that:

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[15] Alvin Johnson, "The Walden School," *New Republic*, 34 (3/28/23), 134.

[16] de Lima, *Nation*, 119 (7/2/24), 9. Miss de Lima's categories correspond roughly to the scientific, reformist, and child-centered groups described by Cremin. Cf. *Transformation*, p. 288. The other two articles in de Lima's series were: v. 118 (6/18/24), 702-3; v. 119 (7/30/24), 115-8.

> In both schools, questions relating to curriculum are of secondary consideration, and emphasis is laid upon the child's present needs and his innate capacities and interests. The outstanding purpose is to help the children evolve a world of their own in which they will think, act, and express themselves on their own level. Book learning as an end is discouraged, especially in the early years, for it represents at best vicarious experience.

In seeking for creative expression and "real" experiences, the schools abandoned the use of "fixed recitation periods, of assigned lessons, of immovable desks and immovable children." The positive results of this new education were most apparent in the arts:

> To those inured to the stereotyped and poverty-stricken responses of children brought up in the conventional environment, the creative achievement of the pupils of these newer schools seems almost incredible. This is most dramatically evident in the field of the plastic arts where the work in drawing, painting, and pottery achieves a standard of high professional merit. Striking work is done in music, in rhythm, and in imaginative writing.[17]

Thus, although not provided with an authoritative definition of child-centered education, journal readers were informed that in contrast to traditional instruction it involved more freedom for the child, more attention to his interests and impulses, less emphasis on subject matter, and more opportunity for creative artistic expression. Readers also had brought to their attention a surprising number of the newer schools and their work. Lewis Mumford enthused at length over the art produced in such institutions as the Keith and Potomac Schools. Miss de Lima described Elizabeth Irwin's Public School 61 in New York, in which children learned through "free activity and first-hand experience." Evelyn Dewey - daughter of John Dewey - surveyed the work of the Moraine Park, Shady Hill, Children's, and City and Country Schools and - while noting their differences in philosophy and program - declared that they had "one fundamental point of agreement. Real education is impossible without freedom."[18]

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[17] de Lima, Nation, 119 (7/30/24), 116.

IV

It is clear from the educational material carried in the Nation and the New Republic that readers of the journals were given the opportunity to become surprisingly well-informed about trends and experiments in child-centered education. A critical question to be asked, however, concerns the framework of opinion within which this information was offered. Did the journals adopt consistent editorial opinions favoring or opposing the child-centered trend?

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[18] Mumford, "The Child as Artist," New Republic, 47 (6/30/26), 166; de Lima, "The New Education," Nation, 118 (6/18/24), 702; Evelyn Dewey, "The New Education," Nation, 112 (5/11/21), 684. Public School 61 was also known as "The Little Red Schoolhouse," and was located at various times on East 16th Street, in P.S. 64 and in P.S. 61. The work of the school was reported in The Little Red School House, by Agnes de Lima and the School Staff (New York: Macmillan, 1942).

In view of Croly's turn away from a primarily social and political methodology of reform to a more individualistic and educational orientation, one might have expected him to support the movement with enthusiasm.[19] Yet one searches in vain in the New Republics published during the 1920's for an authoritative, unequivocal statement supporting the child-centered over the reformist version of progressive education. One finds instead an eclectic, inclusive support for progressive education in general as distinguished from traditional education. This was evident in an editorial accompanying the journal's 1924 supplement on the public elementary school. The editors explicitly refused to take sides: "The purpose of this supplement is not to set forth a program nor even to marshal the arguments for any special educational theory." But they did indicate their support for a fundamental trend which underlay most of the various forms of educational innovation - "the drift away from formalism. The routine of school life, accentuated by the unprecedented growth of the entire public school system until it had begun to appear an end in itself, has at length become insupportable."[20]

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[19] On Croly's increased faith in individualistic and educational solutions to human problems cf. ch's 7 and 8 above.

[20] Editorial, 'Educational Theory and the Class Room Teacher," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24), 263.

But responses to this deadening formalism and routine could assume a variety of patterns, as the contributors to the supplement indicated - from W. W. Charters' adaptive utilitarianism to W. H. Kilpatrick's reformist "methodolatry," to the individual progress plan of Carleton Washburne and the child-centered approaches of Elizabeth Irwin and Agnes de Lima.[21] The New Republic held to this eclectic position throughout the 1920's amidst all the internecine wars of the progressive education movement. It made its pages available to all shades of progressive educational opinion, and if the exponents of child-centered approaches seemed to get more than their share of space, this may have been only because they represented the new, exciting, frontier thought in the educational world.[22] But for the readers of the New Republic, doubtless John Dewey's socially-oriented utterances on educational matters still carried the most weight. And, as will be seen below, his criticisms of child-centered trends were trenchant and forceful.

Oswald Villard, the Nation's influential editor, never took as intense and informed an interest in educational matters as did Croly. His journal's major contribution in this field during the 1920's was to provide another forum in which writers like de Lima and Evelyn Dewey could sympathetically survey trends in the newer education.[23] The series of articles written by these two were the closest analogue in the Nation to the thorough and comprehensive supplements which the New Republic carried on the public elementary school and the high school.[24] On occasion a Nation editorial would express a concern for "the victims of education," and would propose greater attention to the desires and interests of pupils from kindergarten through college, but for the most part the journal left the shaping of opinion on education to its writers and reviewers.[25]

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[21] "The Public Elementary School," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24, Part II), 1-28. For an excellent contemporary analysis and critique of the various educational approaches of the period, see Boyd Bode, Modern Educational Theories (New York: Macmillan, 1927). Cf. Cremin, Transformation, pp. 222-223, for a summary of the book.

[22] Bruce Bliven, who succeeded Croly as editor of the New Republic, has written that most educational articles in the journal "came in over the transom, that is, volunteered by the author." (Letter to author, 8/2/65). Probably the child-centered educators were during the 1920's those most eager to spread their message.

The Nation too, while taking fewer editorial positions on progressive education than its fellow journal, gave space to a somewhat wider range of views on educational matters. The editors of the New Republic felt, apparently, that the battle against traditional education had been won - if not in the schools, at least in the minds of liberal intellectuals.

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[23] Cf. de Lima's articles cited above; also Evelyn Dewey's series under the same title, "The New Education," Nation 112 (5/4/21), 654-5; (5/11/21), 684-5; also Margaret Naumberg's report on the Eighth Conference on Progressive Education: "Progressive Education," Nation, 126 (3/28/28), 344-5.

[24] These supplements were: "The Public Elementary School," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24, Part II), 1-28; "The American High School," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23, Part II), 1-27. Cf. also the 1930 series on "The New Education, Ten Years After," New Republic, 63, pp. 61-4, 93-6, 123-5, 145-6, 172-6, 204-6; also "The American College and Its Curriculum," New Republic, 32 (10/25/22, Part II), 1-26. A Children's Book Section in the New Republic, 48 (11/10/26), 334-360, also had educationally-oriented articles by Elizabeth Irwin and Lewis Mumford.

[25] Cf. editorial, "As Students See It," Nation, 119

But the Nation occasionally gave space to a "voice from the past" which would express doubts about the whole direction of the new education and sympathy for the defenders of traditional standards. This contrast was symbolized at the end of this period in the reviews of Albert Jay Nock's The Theory of Education in the United States. Nock's book was a defense of what he called "the Great Tradition" in education and an exposure of what he saw as the ill effects of excessive and perverted democracy and equality in schools and colleges. The New Republic chose a none too sympathetic reviewer in John Dewey, who, after providing a fair enough summary of Nock's argument, went on to denounce its "fantastic exaggeration" and its defense of the classical, academic curriculum. Dewey concluded that "since return to the so-called narrow classical system is wholly out of the question, and since it never was what it has come to be in Mr. Nock's idealizing nostalgia," the only rational solution was not to restore elitism to the schools, but to extend real democracy to all areas of society - politics, economics, and education.[26]

The Nation's reviewer, on the other hand, was Abraham Flexner, an influential educator who, according to Cremin, had moved from "moderate progressivism" to "unrelenting anti-progressivism."[27] Flexner praised the book as "worthy in style and content of Matthew Arnold's pen and brain," and enthusiastically passed along Nock's vigorous denunciations of the over-extended, illiberal, non-intellectual curriculum of America's schools and colleges. Flexner managed to work into the review an indictment of Dewey for furthering the confusion between liberal and instrumental education and for helping to produce a "generation that has been demoralized by the equalitarian philosophy that assumes equal importance for Homer, Spinoza and 'Good Housekeeping.'" But Flexner went on to assure Nation readers that he was not quite as tradition-bound as the author: "I am much more willing than Mr. Nock to depart from the letter of the Great Tradition. Educable persons can be educated by means of so-called modern subjects; but, as Mr. Nock rightly maintains, not by being nursed and spoon-fed."[28]

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[26] Dewey, "Bending the Twig," New Republic, 70 (4/13/32), 243.

[27] Cremin, Transformation, p. 160.

But Flexner's critique of the newer trends in education was moderate compared to one carried by the journal in 1929, one so caustic that a reader, Susan Edloff, was prompted to inquire: "Why is the Nation so reactionary when it comes to this topic?"[29] The article which prompted this query was submitted by a self-described "schoolma'am" who after suffering through a summer of education courses, felt impelled to protest the anti-academic, unscholarly trends in the new education. Among the targets of her attack were various "evangelical purposes" of education: Education for Leadership, Education for [illegible]

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[28] Abraham Flexner, "Education in America," Nation, 134 (1/17/32), 207.

[29] Susan E. Edloff, Letter to editor, Nation, 129 (10/9/29), 385.

Abundant Life, Education for Social Efficiency - education for everything except education."[30] Doubtless the indignant teacher who had submitted this article was shooting at some very vulnerable targets. The point, however, is that it could be read - as it was by Edloff - as a defense of what he called "reactionary and unrealistic" classical education. And, as Edloff's liberal convictions forced him to remind the editor, "your classically educated Bostonians were the ones who decided the fate of Sacco and Vanzetti."[31]

Edloff's indignation had,however, caused him to generalize unfairly. The Nation - while less consistently progressive on educational topics than the New Republic - was not, as de Lima's, Evelyn Dewey's, and Margaret Naumberg's articles surely attest, "reactionary." But it seemed to have among its editors, writers, and readers larger numbers whose liberalism was primarily political, and which did not extend consistently to matters of morality, education, and culture.

According to Heywood Broun, this rather restricted political liberalism was a characteristic of Villard, the journal's editor - and as he said, "The Nation is Oswald Garrison Villard." In a delightful piece on "What's the matter with the Nation?" Broun claimed that the journal suffered chiefly from the fact that it was "edited by gentlemen and, almost I fear, by ladies.' He objected to the "malarial mist of good taste" which clung to the journal and noted that in matters of art, culture, and poetry, as "in so many respects, Mr. Villard is an extremely conservative man." Brown professed to be disturbed by Villard's status as a total abstainer and by his prejudices against rowdyism and obscenity. His solution: "Put vine leaves in Villard's hair and the circulation of the Nation would reach 200,000 before the year was out."[32]

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[30] A Schoolma'am (pseud.), "Summer School is Over," Nation, 129 (8/28/29), 221. Perhaps the closest comparable protest in the New Republic during this period was by Lillian Herstein, "What Is the High School Teacher's Job?" New Republic, 36 (11/7/23, Part II), 11-12.

[31] Edloff, Nation, v. 129, p. 365.

Although Broun became - as usual - carried away by the excesses of his own imagination, he clearly had put his finger on one of the real but subtle characteristics distinguishing the Nation from the New Republic. Although Villard's journal probably exceeded the New Republic in political vigor during the 1920's (Broun called it "the most effective rebel periodical in America")[33] its editorials were rarely as receptive to avant-garde developments in morality, psychology, culture or - most important for our purposes - in education. The Nation could, and did, support those reformist elements of progressive education which had commanded its allegiance since [illegible] same time it could withhold its endorsement from the apparently non-reformist, individualistic endeavors of the more child-centered schools.

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[32] Broun, "It seems to Heywood Broun," Nation, 128 (1/2/29), 7-8.

Other commentators have noted the conservative streak in Villard's personality. Lewis Gannett has described him as a "fighting liberal who yearned to be a sound conservative," and Max Lerner has referred to his "paleo-liberalism." Gannett Villard's Nation," Nation, 150 (2/10/40), 156; Lerner, Ideas for the Ice Age, (New York: Viking, 1941), p. 18

[33] Broun, Nation, v. 128, p. 7

V

The phenomenon of "anti-intellectualism" has become one of the recurrent themes of recent American history of ideas. The term is generally applied to that point of view which tends to downgrade the values of rationality, scholarship, and intellect and often to elevate primitivism, impulse, and uninformed faith. Richard Hofstadter, who has made the most extended study of American anti-intellectualism, has defined it as

> . . . a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life.[34]

Hofstadter's book, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life traces the expression of this impulse in such diverse fields as religion, politics, business, agriculture, labor, and education.

Several historians, including Hofstadter, have identified the child-centered movement as one of the seed-beds of anti-intellectual trends in education. Cremin, for example, has noted that some progressives used Freudian insights in such a way as to "shift the focus of the school almost entirely to non-intellectual, or indeed, anti-intellectual concerns."[35]

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[34] Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, p. 7.

[35] Cremin, Transformation, p. 210.

Sol Cohen has identified the Public Education Association of New York City - and particularly its little Red School House project, under the guidance of Elizabeth Irwin - with anti-intellectual trends during the 1920's. He claims that the P.E.A.'s concern over such problems of mental hygiene, delinquency, and non-promotion led it to "minimize courses of study, eliminate academic standards or set them at the lowest level, and educate the public school staff in the principles and precepts of mental hygiene." His research indicates that before World War I, the P.E.A. had taken a generally socially-reformist position on education; later, when it shifted to a more child-centered orientation, it became "no longer merely indifferent to the school's role in the training of intelligence, but hostile to it."[36]

Hofstadter's book on anti-intellectualism includes a lengthy survey of the effects of that force on American schools and colleges since the founding of the republic. In a chapter particularly germane to this topic, entitled "The Child and the World," the author attempts an assessment of John Dewey's responsibility for child-centered and life-adjustment education and their anti-intellectual elements. While recognizing that Dewey increasingly came to deplore the child-centered excesses of his putative disciples, Hofstadter also maintains that Dewey's refusal to outline specific goals for education (other than "growth") led to confusion - that, in fact, "the effect of Dewey's philosophy on the design of curricular systems was devastating." In an equally vigorous indictment, Hofstadter claims that

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[36] Sol Cohen, *Progressives and Urban School Reform* (New York: Teachers College, 1964), pp. 217, 220.

> . . . Dewey did American education a major disservice by providing what appears to be an authoritative sanction for that monotonous and suffocating rhetoric about 'democratic living' with which American educationists smother our discussions of the means and ends of education.

Hofstadter does not claim that Dewey was himself anti-intellectual; he is examining not the intent of Dewey's work, but its effect. And the effects are clearly anti-intellectual:

> Having once put the child so firmly at the center, having defined education as growth without end, Dewey had so weighted the discussion of educational goals that a quarter century of clarifactory statements did not avail to check the anti-intellectual perversions of the theory.[37]

In spite of the vigor of the above statements, Hofstadter's over-all treatment of Dewey is not unsympathetic. Dewey comes through not as the villain of the anti-progressive tracts of Rafferty and Rickover but as a minor tragic figure.[38] One feels a tone of sorrow in Hofstadter's critique - sorrow that Dewey was not a thinker and writer of greater clarity and incisiveness. Had he been such, he might - with his immense prestige and influence - have been able to head off at an earlier date some of the misinterpretations and misapplications of his educational ideas and thus have saved the progressive education movement from some of the excesses which contributed to its downfall and continued bad repute.

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[37] Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, pp. 377, 380n, 389.

[38] Cf. Max Rafferty, What They Are Doing to your Children (New York: New American Library, 1964), pp. 16, 18; Hyman G. Rickover, Education and Freedom (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959), pp. 136-40, 145, 153. Rickover's treatment of Dewey, while exceedingly critical, is more temperate than Rafferty's.

Nevertheless, one may regret that Hofstadter singled out Dewey for such extended treatment in his analysis of anti-intellectualism in education, for in so doing, he neglected to consider some much more vulnerable figures. Had he chosen to explore the educational ideas and practices of Caroline Pratt, Margaret Naumberg, and Elizabeth Irwin, - some of whom were the targets of Dewey's attack on the "cult of the child" - he would have found clearer and more consistent patterns of anti-intellectualism.[39]

VI

The irony of this whole matter of course, is that Dewey and the other educators considered here were, by any reasonable standard, intellectuals. Thus we have (to the degree that these persons are, in fact, "guilty" of the charge leveled against them) what Christopher Lasch has called "the anti-intellectualism of the intellectuals." Lasch's study, The New Radicalism in America, does not focus on educators as a group, but it does consider a number of people associated with the liberal journals (particularly the New Republic), including Dewey, Croly, Lippmann, and Bourne. And Lasch has concluded, on the basis of a sophisticated neo-Freudian analysis of key figures, that at least some American liberal and radical intellectuals have felt impelled to flee from what they saw as their own sterile, incomplete, over-civilized intellectuality. In so doing they have sought the non-rational and the primitive in art, music, literature, politics, and in education.[40]

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[39] Cf. for example the two articles by Margaret Naumberg and John Dewey in the *New Republic*'s 1930 series on progressive education: Naumberg, "The Crux of Progressive Education." 63 (6/25/30), 145-6; Dewey, "How Much Freedom in the New Schools?" 63 (7/9/30), 204-6. The two were clearly arguing, if not with one another, at least with the different points of view on this topic which each represented. Cf. also Beck's article on Naumberg cited above, note 11. One interesting aspect of this topic is that the most vigorous spokesmen for child-centered education were women. Rudy cites the impressions of a German visitor to America in 1927 who thought the country was "over-feminized" and that the "resultant infantilism, passivity and childishness was reflected in the schools with their 'kindergarten complex.'" *Schools in an Age of Mass Culture*, p. 300.

It has already been indicated that the liberal journals were in general supporters of progressive education, and that they gave a hearing to (though not consistent editorial backing for) the child-centered elements of that movement. In view of recent historical interest in anti-intellectualism, and in the light of the recurrent and fundamental educational concern over equality and/or excellence, the following questions seem of special significance to this study: To what degree (if any) did the liberal journals provide a forum for anti-intellectual statements on education? Did the editors themselves take positions which provided aid and comfort to anti-intellectual forces? In short, did Lasch's "anti-intellectualism of the intellectuals" extend to the educational commentary carried by America's leading liberal journals?

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[40] Cf. Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, especially ch. 9, "The Anti-Intellectualism of the Intellectuals."

The first question may be easily answered. In the pages of the Nation, although child-centered experiments are sometimes treated sympathetically, anti-intellectual statements seem to be missing.[41] Perhaps authors who veered close to such positions in the New Republic sought to avoid them while writing for the Nation. It is possible that such writers had the sense that Nation readers were more pedagogically conservative than those of the New Republic, and refrained from expressing their more extravagant and threatening views on education and thus turning away potential progressive allies. A simpler and more likely explanation is that since the sheer bulk of child-centered commentary in the New Republic was greater there was thus a greater likelihood that anti-intellectual statements would come through. Most important, however, is the fact that most of the anti-intellectual statements appearing in the New Republic were made by Elizabeth Irwin, who apparently found it, more than other liberal journals, an appropriate outlet for her views.

In the New Republic's 19[illegible]4 symposium on the elementary school, Miss Irwin wrote enthusiastically of the kind of schooling in which "the conception of education as being of the intellect soon fades into the background." She recognized however, that such a statement raised an important question:

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[41] See the Nation articles cited above in notes [illegible] and 23 of this chapter for sympathetic treatment of child-[illegible]

> If, then, the new school is to take this off-hand view of the intellectual life of the child, what is education all about? It is not primarily a process of imparting information; it is not first of all a method of teaching reading and writing and thereby ridding the country of illiteracy. It is to provide situations in which a child can experiment with life, can express himself creatively, can orient himself in his own world.[42]

(Seven months earlier Agnes de Lima had passed on to New Republic readers the following startling statement of Miss Irwin's: "No child under eight should be expected to form letters less than a foot high, and even then no high standard of perfection should be imposed." Mrs. de Lima added matter-of-factly that "The nerve strain is too severe.")[43]

In 1924, Miss Irwin and Louis Marks published Fitting the School to the Child - an explanation and defense of their child-centered experiment in Public School 61. Agnes de Lima, in her sympathetic review of the book, quoted the authors' statement that:

> What education chiefly needs is that we shall take more for granted in regard to the child's intellectual development and take more thought about teaching him the art of happy and productive living.[44]

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[42] Elizabeth Irwin, "Personal Education," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24, Part II), 8.

[43] de Lima, "A Public School Experiment," New Republic, 38 (4/9/24), 175.

[44] de Lima, "Education Moves Ahead," (Review of seven books on education), New Republic, 40 (11/12/24, Part II), 24.

And Miss Irwin herself made the point even more forcefully two years later in a plea that six-year-olds not be taught to read: "If I had my way I'd turn them all out with balls and bats, hoops and jumping ropes and let them be as illiterate as nature made them for at least another year or two."

Miss Irwin's readers must have been even more startled by the statements that followed. She had noticed that:

> Bright children usually learn to read of themselves with very little help before they are eight, and the task of the modern school becomes one of luring them from this field into activity.

Such an approach naturally brought anxious-questions. Miss Irwin reported that she was often asked: "Do you prevent your children from learning to read when they want to?" Her reply was: "Not by main force do we prevent them, but if we can make reality more enticing and participation in active enterprises more interesting, we feel that we have succeeded better than if we leave them bent double over the Book of Knowledge."[45]

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[45] Elizabeth Irwin, "The Youngest Intellectuals," New Republic, 48 (11/10/26), 339-41. This statement invites more extended analysis than can be given it here. But one must note Miss Irwin's appeal to "nature" for authority here - a common habit of anti-formalists from Rousseau to the child-centered educators. One is impelled to ask why balls, bats, hoops, and jump ropes are any more "natural" than paper, pencils, and books.

Cohen, in his history of the Public Education Association cites Irwin's Little Red School House (Public School 61) as "the embodiment of philanthropy and social work, non-education by traditional definition . . . " Progressives and Urban School Reform, p. 217.

But statements such as these were rare in New Republic articles and reviews - and they were even more scarce in the editorials carried by that journal. Occasionally in the heat of dispute with educational conservatives the editors would oppose a "return to the 'intellectual' standpoint of the older type" of education. Or they would express the not-uncommon opinion that in the high school the "field of choice should not be limited to so-called intellectual pursuits . . ." But the statement which followed the latter comment may have evoked surprise from the journal's intellectual readers: " . . . nor should any prejudice be exerted in their favor."[46]

Standing by themselves, statements such as those above certainly provide at least partial evidence that anti-intellectual views had penetrated the educational thinking of some New Republic writers and editors. But context is all-important here. A further look at the articles and editorials cited indicates that in most cases the writers believed that their newer approaches to education would eventually result in greater, rather than less, intellectual development.

Miss Irwin, for example, in her article on "Personal Education," followed her critical comments on intellectual education with a list of stages: "First of all a child functions physically, then emotionally, and then intellectually. In the traditional school this order is reversed and therefore the child does not function at all. He is educated in the passive voice." Her position was that an organic, "personal" education would fit in with the child's natural growth patterns and thus result in greater development in all areas:

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[46] Editorial, "Fundamentals in Education," New Republic, 34 (3/14/23), 58; Editorial, "The High School and Democracy," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23), 269. The latter editorial accompanies the supplement on "The American High School."

> If the first few years of children's lives are devoted to self-initiated activity, to free use of their hands, their bodies, and their imaginations without much regard to what they learn or to the actual quality of what they make, it automatically happens that their standard of performance goes up. Their intellectual curiosity awakes and they themselves wish to be taught the techniques of the work they are doing and demand the information that the traditional school is so eager to give them. Such children learn to read because they want to; they learn to reason because they have to; they learn arithmetic because they need it.[47]

And Mrs. de Lima, one of Miss Irwin's most enthusiastic interpreters, felt impelled to make the same point in "Education Moves Ahead," in which she reviewed Irwin's and Marx's Fitting the School to the Child along with other educational books. She asserted that

> Children who are 'let alone,' who are not forced into uncongenial tasks and held to them by the lash of the schoolmaster, or by his black marks, are learning as well if not

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[47] Irwin, "Personal Education," New Republic. 40 (11/12/24), 8, 9.

> better than those in the traditional school; they are acquiring not merely more general information and a vastly richer sense of the world, but they can read, write and do arithmetic in advance of their grade.

She cited experimental evidence of this point from Ellsworth Collings' study of an experimental school in McDonald County Missouri. Collings' work demonstrated that "children, under such a regime, acquire the 'common facts and skills' - the three R's - better than in the traditional school."[48]

This theme - that the newer education, particularly the child-centered version, not only provided for children's physical, emotional, and esthetic needs but that it equalled or surpassed traditional schools in intellectual or academic development - appears in numerous educational articles in the journals during these years. Thus Miss Irwin closed the article in which she had proposed the postponement of reading by holding out the promise that if children exercise their "intelligence upon the problems of their miniature world," this will induce a "hunger for information and a thirst for intellectual adventure that will demand the aid of books." Lawrence Morris claimed that "by shoveling information into children, the traditional schools fill their heads with unrelated knowledge and deaden intelligence. Miss Pratt, by assuming that childhood _is a part of life instead of a preparation for it_, awakens intelligence." Agnes de Lima's articles in the _Nation_ asserted that in Miss Irwin's educational scheme "the three R's are adequately taken care of, though not in the ordinary stultifying fashion." And Evelyn Dewey presented _Nation_ readers with the same assurance, noting that at the Children's School "the children keep ahead of the conventional school curriculum."[49]

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[48] de Lima, "Education Moves Ahead," New Republic, 40 (11/12/24), 23. This is consistent with Mrs. de Lima's retrospective evaluation of child-centered education. In an interview with the author, she vigorously rejected the blanket assessment of child-centered education as anti-intellectual. In most child-centered schools, she notes, children were surrounded by good books and did excellent academic work. A few institutions like the Walden school did become too Freudian, and some schools let the children run wild. But even in these schools the children learned more than in conventional schools. (Interview, 11/18/65).

What one sees running throughout these statements is - to complicate an aphorism - the belief that schools could have their academic bread and eat their child-centered cake too.[50] Or, as Alvin Johnson put it in reporting that the Walden School was able to surpass traditional academic standards: "The school is ready to pay Caesar in full the things that are Caesar's."[51] The interesting point in all this is that no writers stepped forward to defend a version of child-centered education which was unabashedly non- or anti-intellectual. The various authors promoted an education in which schools could (to add yet another proverb) seek first the kingdom of childhood, freedom, and impulse with the blessed assurance that all else (achievement test scores and college admissions) would be added unto them.

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[49] Irwin, "The Youngest Intellectuals," _New Republic_, 48 (11/10/26), 341; Lawrence Morris, "Intelligence as a Physiological Process," (review of books by L. Stott and by Caroline Pratt and J. Stanton), _New Republic_, 51 (7/27/27), 261; de Lima, "The New Education," _Nation_, 118 (5/18/24), 702. Miss de Lima made the same point in her third article in this series, 119 (7/30/24), 117, and in "Education in the Making," _New Republic_, 40 (11/19/24), 304. Cf. also: E. Dewey, "The New Education," _Nation_, 112 (5/11/21), 685; C. Pratt, "Two Basic Principles of Education," _New Republic_, 63 (7/2/30), 174.

Robert Leigh, in 1941, took a similar position in "Scholarship and Progressive Education," _Progressive Education_, 18 (December, 1941), 408-410: "Scholarship, therefore, despite all the false moves, foolish practices, and current counter-emphases, has a fundamental ally in progressive education." (p. 410).

[50] In labeling the child-centered progressives "sentimentalists," Cremin quotes Chesterton's definition of the sentimentalist as the "man who wants to eat his cake and have it. . . . he will not see that one must pay for an idea as for anything else . . . " _Transformation_, pp. 376-7.

VII

Some writers for the journals would not let the child-centered enthusiasts off so easily. Thus in 1929 Jean Temple, a former teacher at the Walden School, emphasized in her New Republic review of Rugg and Shumaker's The Child-Centered School the authors' critiques of the lack of intellectual discipline in the new schools: They "feel that the experimental school fails to train in critical intelligence, in those estimates, appreciations, and generalizations which are essential to either understanding or direction of the problems presented by modern culture."[52]

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[51] Alvin Johnson, "The Walden School," New Republic, 34 (3/28/23), 135. This has the neat effect of casting the traditional school in the role of Caesar, thus assigning a more exalted status to the progressive schools. On this point, Joseph K. Hart declared that the continual assertions that the child-centered could have the best of both worlds were 'rationalizations, wishful thinking, defenses of inertia." "Judging Our Progressive Schools," New Republic, 63 (6/11/30), 96.

Miss Temple's review was followed a year later in the same journal by three authoritative analyses of child-centered education and its alleged failure to provide for optimal intellectual development. By the time these articles appeared the stock market crash had taken place, the great depression was beginning to settle over the country, and apparently the socially-oriented reformist educators were beginning to reassert themselves more vigorously. Boyd Bode of Ohio State University wrote the first article in the series on "The New Education Ten Years After." His contribution was an incisive critique of both "the doctrine of specific objectives" and "the doctrine of 'freedom.'" By the former he meant the pseudoscientific, hyper-utilitarian pedagogy identified with Franklin Bobbitt and W. W. Charters. Bode noted the absence of any reformist element in this "scheme," which was "naturally predicated on the requirements of society as now constituted. . . ." His general assessment of this philosophy: "A more poverty-stricken conception of education than this it would be difficult to imagine."

Bode was somewhat less hostile to "the freedom theory of education." He noted, however, that its claims to true Deweyan lineage were not clear. This theory,

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[52] Jean Temple, "The Modern School and Our Present Culture," New Republic, 57 (1/2/29), 199. Temple quoted the authors' opinion that some of the schools were producing "dabblers," triflers, witty surface-scrapers of life. Out of such cannot come the moving force to live life and remake it in the living."

> though always facile in quoting Dewey to its purpose, seems never to have acquired an understanding of Dewey's conception of freedom. . . . . According to Dewey, freedom is achieved through the exercise of intelligence, whereas the less discriminating of his disciples understand him to mean that intelligence is achieved through the exercise of freedom.[53]

Freedom, then, was not something to be found when external adult stimuli and coercion were removed; it was to be created through the growth of a disciplined intelligence.[54] And for the development of such intelligence "a body of scientifically-organized matter is of inestimable value, not only as a resource in later life, but as a basis for present thinking . . . . The lack of concern for the scientific organization of subject matter that is shown by the newer movements in education is an ominous fact. It tends to justify the suspicion that they seek to achieve the ends of education by a kind of magic."

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[53] Bode, "Apprenticeship or Freedom," New Republic, 63 (9/4/30), 62. Cf. also Dewey's article on "Science, Belief, and the Public," in which he states that "freedom of mind is not something that spontaneously happens. It is not achieved by the mere absence of obvious restraints. It is a product of constant, unremitting nurture of right habits of observation and reflection." New Republic, 38 (4/2/24), 145. No doubt the relationship between freedom and knowledge is reciprocal. As Milton Mayer puts it, "to be free, men must learn; but to learn, they must be free." "Alec Meiklejohn's Maytime," Progressive, 29 (August, 1965), 19. The point is, that according to Bode and Dewey, some educators had over-emphasized the "freedom" element of the equation.

[54] Bode here pointed to the dangers of what has come to be called "other-directedness," noting the "defenselessness of children against external stimuli." He reported William James' critical comment on an environment which "makes the child seem to belong less to himself than to every object which happens to catch his notice." (New Republic, v. 63, p. 63). Dewey reinforced this point in protesting against the substitution of "child-dictation" for"adult-dictation." "How Much Freedom in the New Schools?" New Republic, 63 (7/9/30), 205.

It is clear that Bode had not been seduced by the beguiling rhetoric of the new Rousseauans. Their pedagogy was lacking in reformist vigor, had "no adequate mission or social gospel," and failed to give adequate emphasis to "the place of intelligence in human affairs. . . . "[55]

The second article in this series, by Joseph K. Hart, provided another profound critique of the excesses of the child-centered movement. Hart's concern centered on two related problems - the lack of personal integration achieved by many progressive school graduates and their lack of ability to relate effectively to others and to society in general. Like Bode, he saw an excess of purposeless freedom and a shortage of intelligent direction: "It seems certain that the progressive schools have been successful in their emotional rebellions against the 'stupidities' of the academic schools, but not so successful in the intellectual task of establishing these freer methods as a positive instrument of personal education in a social world."[56]

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[55] Bode, "Apprenticeship or Freedom," 63-4. Cf. also Bode's review of *Experimental Practice in the City and Country School* by C. Pratt and L. Wright. Bode saw a danger that the activities of such schools might be "trifling and lacking in disciplinary quality." *Nation*, 120 (4/8/25), 387-8.

[56] Joseph K. Hart, "Judging Our Progressive Schools," *New Republic*, 63 (6/11/30), 95. Cf. also C. E. Ayres mixed review of Hart's *The Discovery of Intelligence*. Ayres accepts Hart's view that "the function of education is to cultivate the intellect," but adds that Hart, like James Harvey Robinson, tends to underrate the intellectuality of past eras and to overrate the degree of modern intellectual liberation. *New Republic*, 40 (11/19/24), 300.

One may assume that Bode and Hart "softened up" *New Republic* readers for the final article in the series - a vigorous, authoritative examination by John Dewey of the question "How Much Freedom in the New Schools?"[57] Dewey posited a Hegelian swing from the "thesis" stage of traditional formalistic education to its "antithesis" in the child-centered schools, which had produced a "one-sided emphasis - that upon pupils at the expense of subject matter." He was not satisfied with the shift from the old formalism to the new chaos, and held that the solution was not to discard or to de-emphasize content, but to develop "a new subject matter, as well organized as the old . . . but having an intimate and developing relation to the experience of those in school."

Like Bode, Dewey believed that a new curriculum, well-taught, could enhance the freedom of the child by equipping him more effectively to mold his environment and to direct his own life. He expressed for himself the relationship of freedom to knowledge which Bode had seen in his work. The way for the new schools to increase their effectiveness was to emphasize "the rational freedom which is the fruit of objective knowledge and understanding." Dewey thus outlined the current task of the child-centered school - to go beyond the existing stage of "casual improvisation and living intellectually from hand to mouth." The schools would have to develop experimentally a subject matter which would include "preparation for the social realities - including the evils - of industrial civilization."

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[57] The quotes following are from Dewey's article: *New Republic*, 63 (7/9/30), 204-6. Francis Froelicher's contribution to the series, "A Program for Progressive Schools," was also critical of child-centered excesses: "'Freedom' is a word too often profaned by modern educators. . . . Freedom in academic work must first of all be founded upon thorough, authentic scholarship . . ." v. 63, pp. 123-5. Two of the articles, those by Margaret Naumberg and Caroline Pratt, promoted the child-centered position: v. 63, pp. 145-146, 172-176.

As so much of Dewey's writings attest, intelligence and knowledge were instruments, not ends in themselves. Intelligence had evolved in man in order to help him cope more effectively with his environment.[58] Thus in this article, as in many others, Dewey stressed not only the need for new scientific and social knowledge and the intelligent people required to use that knowledge, but the social ends to which it should be put. For Dewey

> A truly progressive development of progressive education could not be secured by the study of children alone. It requires a searching study of society and its moving forces. That the traditional schools have almost evaded consideration of the social potentialities of education is no reason why progressive schools should continue the evasion, even though it be sugared over with esthetic refinements. The time ought to come when no one will be judged to be an educated man or woman who does not have insight into the basic forces of industrial civilization.

This extended analysis led Dewey in his last sentence to "define out" of the progressive education movement those institutions which ignored the pressing need for this sound social knowledge: "Only schools which take the lead in bringing about this kind of education can claim to be progressive in any socially significant sense."[59]

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[58] Cf., for example, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1961; first published in 1916), pp. 337-8.

What one finds in Dewey's argument, then, is not a defense of neutral intellectuality, of disinterested scholarship. Rather, one sees the eternal reformer aghast at the social waste involved in producing esthetes, dabblers and triflers. Society desperately needed people with deep social insights and skills if human problems were to be solved, and Dewey firmly believed that the schools must produce such people. Thus we see in Dewey's writings (as in Bode's) the twin values of reformism and intellectualism tied inextricably together.

VIII

A brief summary - through the "reader's-eye-view" - will permit consideration of the editors' views on this problem. During the 1920's, the reader of either major journal (but especially the New Republic) was kept well informed on developments in progressive education - including some of the disputes within the movement. The reader of the

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[59] Later New Republic writers were clear on Dewey's role in the new education. C. E. Ayres, for example, wrote that Dewey always stood for "the continuity of learning with doing and living - and not for any particular fad of the 'child-centered' schools." "Dewey: Master of the Commonplace," (in the series "Books that Changed Our Minds,") New Republic, 97 (1/18/39), 304.

New Republic, if he followed the articles and reviews by Elizabeth Irwin and Margaret Naumberg may also have noted the anti-intellectual and non-reformist elements in their educational programs. But he may also have been impressed by the more authoritative and more philosophically rigorous defenses of intellectualism and reformism which issued from the pens of men like J. K. Hart, Boyd Bode, and John Dewey.

Dewey was, of course, from 1922 to 1937 a contributing editor of the New Republic - evidence that he was considered by the regular editors as closely aligned with the general policies and the programs of the journal. The material quoted above is at least a partial indication that Dewey was himself free of the taint of intentional anti-intellectualism. But what of Croly and the other regular editors? Do their editorials cited earlier bespeak a fundamental anti-intellectual bent?[60] Again, by a more thorough examination of the context of editorial statements, we can see that a more complex explanation is required.

In both of the instances noted earlier, the editors' rather snide comments on intellectual studies can be read more properly as defenses of the expanding role of the high schools and as attacks on a narrow academic curriculum. In each case, the editorial was in part a response to attacks on educational trends by President Pritchett of the Carnegie Foundation. (Apparently only Pritchett could raise the ire of the editors sufficiently to back them into superficially anti-intellectual positions.) Pritchett was appalled by the growing masses of young people being retained in American high schools and by the immense expense which this entailed for the nation. (High school costs increased from $140,000,000 in 1890 to more than $1,000,000,000 in 1920.[61] He felt that many of these young people should not be retained in high school. Since many of them were ill-prepared to profit from traditional academic studies, they had forced the schools to lower standards and to expand the school curriculum to include vocational training and other watered-down fare. His solution was to return to educational fundamentals and to let non-academic pupils either drop out of school entirely or enter special trade schools.[62]

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[60] Cf. the editorials cited above in note 46.

In the editors' minds, Pritchett had raised what was basically a class issue. They saw the consequence of Pritchett's proposals as a restriction of the high school to the more prosperous classes and a dumping of lower-class children either onto the labor market or into vocational schools which would serve to freeze existing class lines:

> The notion that schooling should end for all but the ablest and most fortunate at twelve or fourteen years of age is a monstrous survival of everything that we as Americans are

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[61] Editorial, "The High School and Democracy," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23), 268.

[62] Pritchett's views were contained in the 17th Annual Report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (New York, 1922). Cf. especially part V, "The Rising Cost of Education," pp. 93-117. The quotation cited in the editorial is from page 101.

> committed to getting away from. It represents an abdication of social intelligence and nurture; a surrender of society to blind chance with the odds all on the side of those favored by fortune.[63]

Like Dewey, the editors saw the sources of educational problems as lying in many cases beyond the school: "A transitional and often incoherent society has reflected itself in a transitional and often incoherent education." And they agreed with Dewey that the way out was neither to return to the old subject matter nor to abandon content altogether. The solution was to discover new fundamentals in education "appropriate to the needs of those who attend." Educational and social needs required "faith in humanity and faith in inquiry and continued experimentation. Social snobbishness, fear for the pocket of the tax-payer and complacent assurance that fundamentals are already known renders a disservice."[64]

The depth of the editors' conviction on this point is attested by the fact that their editorial, "The High School and Democracy," which accompanied the New Republic supplement on the high school eight months later, was to a large degree a reprise of this earlier statement. The editors cited some of the same remarks of Pritchett's and rebutted them with several of the same points. But this time they had George Counts' empirical evidence on class discrimination in high schools with which to undergird their opinions.[65]

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[63] Editorial, "Fundamentals in Education," New Republic, 34 (3/14/23), 58. Cremin points out that the New Republic carried editorials favorable to the limitation of college enrollments. (Transformation, p. 1[illegible]9). But the motivation here was similarly class-conscious: they believed existing colleges were often "social clubs for the aristocracy." New Republic, 32 (10/4/22), 137-8.

[64] New Republic, v. 34, pp. 5[illegible]-9.

The editors were, however, perceptive enough to note that among their contributors those who had to live and work amidst the pressures and problems of the new mass high school - the teachers and administrators - (as distinguished from the professors of education) were more inclined to sympathize with views like those of Pritchett's. They were the ones who suffered when the high school became a "kindergarten for adolescents." They were the ones who wondered "how long the experiment of democracy must continue to involve individual and social waste and inefficiency."[66] The way out, however, was not to choose between educational democracy and educational excellence, but to keep the young in school, help them to choose appropriate educational paths, and then to insure that "the years of choice shall be followed by years of more strenuous application of standards of workmanship, whether in intellectual or technical efforts."

Like so many New Republic and Nation editorials on education, this one ended on a reformist note. The editors insisted that "the chief derelictions of the high school are due to the false standards of the community." Society maintained a social and economic class structure which impelled parents and children to use the schools as ladders of individual mobility. But the real solution was to create a true industrial democracy in which class lines and privileges would be wiped out - and the "high school should itself be a powerful engine in bringing industrial society to this equilibrium. . . ."[67]

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[65] New Republic, 36 (11/7/23), 269-70; Counts, "The Social Composition of the High School," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23, Part II), 5-7.

[66] These teachers were experiencing the shift described by Martin Trow from an "elite preparatory" to a "mass terminal" educational system. (The third stage, which, according to Trow, we are now undergoing, is the "mass preparatory.") Cited in Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, p. 357.

It would appear, then, that when the editors did seem to veer close to the abyss of intellectualism, they were in fact engaging in anti-formalism, anti-academicism, and anti-conservatism. They fought the attempt by men like Pritchett to restore the high school as a class-bound intellectual hothouse; they were no more favorable to permitting it to remain as a "kindergarten for adolescents." As with men like Bode and Dewey, their defenses of democracy and of social intelligence formed a seamless whole.

IX

The case for the "intellectualism of the intellectuals" is strengthened when one looks beyond educational comment into other areas of concern to the liberal journals. Throughout the 1920's the journals fought the "intellectual obscurantism"[68] represented by fundamentalists and super-patriots. Dewey was particularly perceptive on this point, recognizing that the battle was partly an internal one: that progressives had to deal also with some of the anti-rational elements within their own political ranks. He noted that in the case of men like Bryan, progressivism and hostility to free inquiry were not coincidental but deeply related: "There is a genuine and effective connection between the political and the doctrinal directions of his activity, and between the popular responses they call out . . . The net result is social and political liberalism combined with intellectual illiberality." Thus while paying his respects to the political and economic progress attributable to such leaders, Dewey complained that their reforms did not go deep enough - that they failed to develop an atmosphere of free inquiry or to remove the "fixed limits to thought."

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[67] "The High School and Democracy," 269-70. Croly, an avid Anglophile, cited the lesson "preached and illustrated by Sanderson of Oundle" in support of this last point. The New Republic had recently carried a series by H. G. Wells on Sanderson's work. Cf. v. 36, pp. 146-7, 172-4, 199-201, 226-8, 278-80, 324-7.

> No future liberal movement, when active liberalism revives, will be permanent unless it goes deep enough to affect it. Otherwise we shall have in the future what we have had in the past, revivalists like Bryan, Roosevelt and Wilson, movements which embody moral emotions rather than the insight and policy of intelligence.[69]

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[68] This phrase was used in a New Republic editorial, 47 (6/23/26), 130.

[69] Dewey, "The American Intellectual Frontier," New Republic, 30 (5/10/22), 303-5. This article shows Dewey's ability to utilize historical as well as philosophical insights. He notes the American fear of a descent into barbarism, claiming that "we are evangelical because of our fear of ourselves and our latent frontier disorderliness." (p. 30[illegible]).

Croly shared Dewey's concern over these irrational elements within the liberal movement. And his fear of this irrationalism led him to impute a degree of it to so influential an intellectual as the historian James Harvey Robinson. In 1922 Robinson published a popular little book entitled The Mind in the Making, in which he pointed out the prevalence of ignorance and superstition inherited from a less enlightened past, and proposed an increased dependence on creative scientific thought as the path to social progress. (The theme of the book was disclosed in the subtitle: "The Relation of Intelligence to Social Reform"). The book was first reviewed in the New Republic by Carl Becker, who noted the difficulties involved in Robinson's belief that both the individual and society could to a degree transcend their own histories and mold themselves in desired directions.[70] But Croly apparently felt that Becker had let Robinson off too easily, and in an editorial entitled "Liberalism and Irrationalism," he indicted Robinson for what he termed his "acceptance of the fashionable distrust of reason." He accused Robinson of "ideophobia," a condition which had its roots in "the half-baked metaphysical doctrine of determinism." But Robinson's alleged anti-intellectualism was to Croly only symptomatic; many modern liberals suffered from a similar malady: "It is significant of the danger to true liberalism from the anti-rational modes which prevail among 'intellectuals' today. The reaction against the follies of the old rationalism has led them to the opposite extreme of irrationalism." What was needed was a restoration of perspective. The old liberalism

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[70] Carl Becker, New Republic, 30 (4/5/22), 174-6.

> came to grief because in its enthusiasm for reason it ignored the roots of humanity in brute animal nature. . . This, however, does not mean that we must reject the older liberalism but that we must give it a firmer basis. For the discovery that the flowers of human nature have their roots in the dark soil, does not in any way deny the value and importance of sunlight.

Croly's plea, then, was for the rationalists' view that "the organic or basic motives of man should be regulated and controlled by the light of reason."[71]

John Dewey believed that this editorial did a serious injustice to Robinson, and he wrote a severe rejoinder, accusing the editors of a "method of interpretation which is hardly either rational or liberal." He pointed out correctly that Robinson's critique had been directed not against man's rational faculties but against "'rationalization' in the psycho-analytic sense." In fact, the thesis of the book was that the human mind, using the scientific approaches which had proved so successful in the natural sphere, could begin to solve the social problems which so plagued mankind. Far from being an irrationalist, Robinson of all contemporary historians approached "most nearly in temper and by training the men of the French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century."[72]

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[71] Unsigned editorial, "Liberalism and Irrationalism," New Republic, 30 (5/17/22), 333-4. (The style and content are clear evidence of Croly's authorship.) Part of Croly's misplaced vigor in this editorial may be explained by the personal antipathy which he had developed toward Robinson. They had worked together in founding the New School for Social Research, but according to Alvin Johnson, by 1921 "Croly had come to detest Robinson and all his educational ideas. When Robinson offered him the manuscript of a book for the New Republic series, Croly wouldn't look at it. The book was Mind in the Making. It readily found a publisher who sold more than a hundred thousand copies. None of us on the New Republic was very happy over our lost opportunity." Pioneer's Progress (New York, Viking, 1952), p. 279.

It was clear that Dewey had the best of the argument, but Croly penned a rather lame reply in which he straddled the case by claiming that Robinson had not, "despite his fundamental faith in intelligence, escaped from the withering influence of the prevailing irrationalism. . . ." He closed with a word of praise for Robinson's contributions to liberalism, but proclaimed the importance of a rigorous search for a philosophically sound progressivism: liberals could not, "like conservatives or doctrinaire revolutionaries, put esprit de corps or party loyalty above loyalty to the cause of truth."[73]

Aside from the entertaining spectacle of leading liberal intellectuals hurling charges of irrationalism, illiberalism, and "intellectual unsophistication"[74] at one another, what meaning did this dispute have? The significant point for our purpose here is that both Dewey and Croly (and Robinson, in spite of Croly's animadversions) were assuming the role of defenders of rationality and intelligence. Both recognized the power of irrational primitive impulses in influencing human behavior (although Croly seemed to find this recognition distasteful). But both held strongly to the position that the human intellect should be so nurtured and educated that it could direct and guide those basic impulses. Both wanted what Irwin Edman saw was Robinson's goal: "an education and a social milieu that will produce minds fit and free to solve the problems of our own day . . . ."[75]

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[72] Dewey, "Mind in the Making," (letter to editor), New Republic, 31 (6/7/22), 48.

[73] Editors' reply to Dewey, New Republic, 31 (6/7/22), 48. It is hard not to see in Croly's behavior the Freudian mechanism of projection. Croly, with his interest in mysticism, was certainly closer to irrationalism than was Robinson.

[74] Dewey, New Republic, v. 31, p. 48.

This debate between Dewey and Croly (with Robinson caught in the crossfire) highlights the inter-related issues which have been considered above. The 1920's were an era when educators, psychologists, writers, journalists, and reformers were becoming increasingly conscious of the nonrational aspects of human nature. Liberals of the period were reacting against the one-sided, rationalistic picture of humanity which had been held by many of the earlier progressives. And in their reaction, some - including educators like Margaret Naumberg and Elizabeth Irwin - swung over to a position in which the permissive expression of non-rational impulses came to be looked on as a positive good. As intellectual journals whose role it was to keep readers informed of a wide spectrum of cultural developments, the New Republic and - to a lesser degree - the Nation, gave a hearing to such hyper-progressive educators. But in their roles as journals of opinions, the two magazines never fully endorsed child-centered education. Nor did they succumb to the anti-intellectualism implicit (and occasionally explicit) in some interpretations of this brand of progressivism. While they consistently attacked what they saw as elitist, conservative, anti-democratic and snobbish defenses of an older cultural academicism, they were powerful voices as well in promoting what they saw as a newer, more creative, scientifically-oriented intellectualism.

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[75] Irwin Edman, "Making the Mind Fit the Times," (review of The Mind in the Making), Nation, 114 (1/18/22), 75. This was a much fairer assessment of the book than was Croly's. Edman correctly understood Robinson's purpose in dealing with man's irrational impulses. "By making us conscious of the forces which operate to becloud and bemuddle our intelligence he has hoped, and justly, to contribute to its emancipation."

Chapter Ten: Summary: The Worker, the Child and the School

I

The topics treated in the two preceding chapters - worker education and the child-centered schools - may be seen as fixing the outer limits of the educational concerns of the Nation and the New Republic during the 1920's. At the social reformist end of the spectrum the journals supported a nascent workers' education movement, hoping that it might help to forge an alliance between proletarians and intellectuals.[1] At the more individualistic pole of the continuum, liberal journalists looked with interest and some sympathy on the various child-centered experiments of the decade.[2] In this area their hope was that these new schools, in their endeavor to educate children in an atmosphere of acceptance and freedom, might produce creative adults liberated from the tensions and hostilities plaguing previous generations.

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[1] This concern for joining the interests of proletarians and intellectuals was, of course, not new in American history. In 1840 George Ripley wrote to Ralph Waldo Emerson of his purposes in starting Brook Farm: " . . . to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same person . . . " Quoted by John L. Thomas in "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly, 17 (Winter, 1965), 676.

[2] It should be emphasized that while the journals probably allotted more space to child-centered education than to the workers' schools, they gave warm editorial support to the latter and only benevolent expressions of interest in the former.

The above statement, while defining the general boundaries of journal educational interests during the decade, fails to emphasize the congruence between the social and individual areas. Socially-oriented labor education worked - as all education must - ultimately with individual students, and aimed at developing a new cadre of effective union leadership. And the more child-centered progressive schools, as interpreted in the journals, insisted that the products of their institutions would play significant roles in building a more humane and livable society.

Thus there need be no fundamental inconsistency in the picture of liberal journals providing publicity, sympathy, and criticism, (though in varying proportions), for both of these movements. But it is worth noting that journal support for workers' education was part of a more continuous tradition than was their interest in the child-centered school. The reformist emphasis in labor education had deep roots in the journals' educational positions of the previous decade and continued to be vigorously expressed in the educational commentary of the Nation and the New Republic during the 1930's. The child-centered emphasis, however, - to the degree that it was individually-oriented and less reformist in immediate intent - found less expression in either the 1910's or the 1930's. Thus, if we accept these two journals as legitimate spokesmen for the dominant emphases of American liberalism, it seems fair to say that the Nation's and the New Republic's support of reformist workers' education was characteristic of a deeper and more significant strain of liberal educational thought than was their sympathy for the child-centered schools.

There is another area of congruence which - though it would be nearly impossible to "prove" historically - is worth mentioning as a provocative and potentially productive hypothesis. Liberal interest in workers' education and in the child-centered school may both be interpreted as arising out of (or at least strengthened by) what Christopher Lasch has called the "secret self-contempt" of American intellectuals. Lasch has provided considerable evidence from the lives and the writings of a number of "new radicals" - including many who are considered in this study - to indicate that there has been since the late nineteenth century, a "rebellion of intellectuals against middle-class culture."[3] Among the numerous examples of this which he presents are two which are particularly germane here: the envy (often unconscious) which intellectuals have had for the realism, power, and vigor of the working classes, and the similar and related jealousy of proletarian freedom from constraint and inhibition. Lasch feels that American intellectuals have had a persistent tendency to try to escape from their own fairly rigid, conventional, middle class backgrounds, and consequently to romanticize the lower classes. A corollary of this has been the romanticizing of childhood, with its supposed innocence and freedom from restraint.[4]

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[3] Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, p. 69.

To the degree that these impulses have characterized American intellectuals (and Lasch is quite persuasive on this point) they would have provided motive power for the interest of liberal journalists in both the worker education movement and the child-centered schools. It has already been noted above, that writers for both the Nation and the New Republic made invidious comparisons between middle class academic schooling - the kind which most of the journalists had experienced - and the more active, relevant, and realistic education which was offered in workers' education classes. More important, the journalists continually praised the enthusiastic response of the workers in the labor schools in contrast with the dull and unimaginative reaction of middle class students in conventional institutions.

A similar attitude pervaded many journal articles on child-centered education. A fundamental characteristic of much of the writing on the experimental schools was enthusiasm for their freedom, their lack of rigid curricula, their releasing of children from adult restraints. The attractiveness of these schools to some of the journalists was doubtless related to the appeal which Freudianism had for many intellectuals at this time: both seemed to offer liberation from outmoded, restrictive, repressive, middle-class restraints. The exaltation of the natural child, the unleashing of all his impulses - including the sexual - may be interpreted as at the same time an implied condemnation of the inhibited, rationalistic background of the writers.

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[4] Lasch, pp. 86-7, 142-4.

The analysis of anti-intellectualism in the preceding chapter should make it clear that enthusiasm for child-centered education was by no means dominant among the liberal journalists. But it had a strong appeal to some of them, and elements of it were attractive to most of them. The ambivalence of some journalists on the "new education" was doubtless related to the difficulty of reconciling middle-class intellectualism with what they saw as lower-class freedom from restraint. But, as was indicated earlier, when a choice had to be made, most active liberals chose - like Croly, Bode, and Dewey - to elevate rationality over free impulse.

The Nation and the New Republic had much less difficulty with workers' education. By associating with this movement the journalists perhaps vicariously enter the envied lower class. Equally important, they could partially overcome some of the feelings of powerlessness which were built into their roles as intellectuals. As commentators on social events they had to remain somewhat removed from politicians and power figures in order to be able to comment critically on events. But this was a frustrating position for intelligent, articulate men, many of whom felt themselves to be the mental and moral superiors of those who wielded power. This may explain the occasional and erratic attempts of the journalists to exert direct influence on politicians like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.[5] The journalists, consciously or not, may have felt that it would be equally productive, but less dangerous, to support a movement rather than a man. The logical movement - the one with which liberal journalists seemed to have the most in common - was labor. And the most hopeful innovation in the unions during the 1920's - and the one to which journalists could make the most direct and effective contribution - was workers' education.

As was indicated above, this is all rather speculative. But in seeking explanations for the attitudes of liberal journalists towards such movements as workers' education and child-centered schools it can do no harm, and may possibly yield useful insights, to attempt to see these attitudes as aspects of a larger effort to escape from the powerlessness and inhibitions which their roles as middle-class intellectuals placed upon them.

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[5] Lasch, pp. 192-3, 169. Forcey's *The Crossroads of Liberalism* also makes much of the liberal journalists' feelings of powerlessness and their occasional efforts to establish a relationship with power. Of Croly, Weyl, and Lippmann a few years earlier he has written: "Living in a day when intellectuals had more to say in the land than usual, the three publicists hovered like moths on the flaming edges of power. Though writers, theorists, journalists first of all, they also sought a more direct influence than their published words could bring. But more than once they were to come away from the bright light of power both chastened and charred." (p. 5).

II

The above treatment of these two topics does not, of course, provide comprehensive coverage of the educational concerns of the liberal journals during the 1920's. It merely provides case studies on two themes which, while significant in themselves, also help to define some of the educational issues important to liberals of the period. There are also a number of other educational matters which the Nation and the New Republic treated more or less intensively, and with which a detailed examination of the period might deal.

One such topic is the role assumed by the journals as defenders of the schools against illiberal attacks. Workers' education and child-centered pedagogy may both be seen as efforts to extend education into new fields. Workers' education dealt with a new adult clientele, previously untouched by most formal education. It developed a new curriculum as well, including labor history and theory, techniques of collective bargaining, and other content appropriate to its unique student body. The child-centered schools, on the other hand, were not working with a new type of student, but enrolled children who would otherwise have attended traditional or "early progressive" schools. But while the child-centered schools did not deal with a new clientele, one might say that they were attempting to reach previously ignored elements in the life of their pupils. That is, in their efforts to educate the "whole child," these schools - particularly those with a Freudian orientation - tried to develop deep levels of personality untouched by most conventional education. In this effort they utilized more permissive teachers, a more open curriculum, and a more varied methodology. Thus in publicizing both movements, the Nation and the New Republic could see themselves as fulfilling their liberal function as frontier thinkers - as promoters of creative change.

But the liberal journals were often forced to play another role as well, and one that was of considerable significance in the 1920's: the defense of individuals and institutions against attacks by conservatives, bigots, racists, and super-patriots. A more extended treatment of this period might well include attention to this defensive function of the journals. During a decade when conservatives controlled the federal administration, Congress (for much of the period), many state and federal courts, governors, and state legislatures, there was a great deal of liberal defending to do. The resurgence of the Klan, and the fundamentalist offensive culminating in the Scopes Trial, brought further threats to the schools.

Throughout the decade one finds in the *Nation* and the *New Republic* editorials, articles, and letters protesting attacks on educational institutions. When the political situation made it unlikely that public schools could adopt a vigorously reformist role, liberals could at least defend whatever integrity and liberality schools already had. This defense, of necessity, took place on a long front. For instance, George Norris, the Nebraska Senator and exponent of public power, wrote for the *Nation* an exposé of "The Power Trust in the Public Schools." The *New Republic* - also constitutionally suspicious of big business - too was worried about the "shocking state of affairs in which the public utilities have tried to buy up the press, the radio and even the secondary schools."[6]

The journals' continued defense of academic freedom can be seen in this same framework. When the notorious Lusk Committee in New York State trampled on the rights of educators, the *New Republic* affirmed its belief in the school as "the true frontier of civilization," and declared that it could only fulfill its function in an atmosphere of freedom.[7]

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[6] George W. Norris, "The Power Trust in the Public Schools," *Nation*, 129 (9/18/29), 296-7; Editorial, "Professors and Propagandists," *New Republic*, 63 (7/16/30), 219.

[7] Editorial (presumably Croly's), *New Republic*, 26 (3/2/21), 9. One of the earliest articles which Bruce Bliven (who succeeded Croly as editor) wrote for the *New Republic* was on the topic of academic freedom. Cf. "Free Speech, But -- !" v. 30 (4/5/22), 160-2. At this time Bliven was still associate editor of the *New York Globe*.

And when the journals themselves were involved - as when Los Angeles barred the Nation and the New Republic from school libraries - the editorial protest was especially vigorous.[8] But the journals were also the first to applaud when educators won an occasional victory over their attackers - as did David S. Muzzey when in 1929 he forced a superpatriotic congressman to retract his charge that one of Muzzey's texts contained seditious material.[9]

Educators and liberals were under attack during the 1920's not only by businessmen and patriots, but by conservative religionists as well. The Scopes Trial was, of course, the outstanding example in this area. The Nation saw the Tennessee anti-evolution law as a natural outgrowth of parochial, small-town America, which provided "a fine soil for fundamentalism, the Ku Klux Klan, and other manifestations of superstition and ignorance." Tennessee's effort to impose by law its anti-scientific judgments was only an extension of similar efforts since the war to drive "red" teachers out of the schools and to prescribe the content of texts.[10] Equally pessimistic, the New Republic concluded that the public schools were in many areas "becoming the last fortress of the fundamentalists."[11]

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[8] Cf. the editorial note on this subject in the Nation, 112 (5/4/21), 640. The editors were happy to note that teachers had protested the school board's action.

[9] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 129 (10/30/29), 478.

[10] Editorial, "Tennessee vs. Truth," Nation, 121 (7/8/25), 58. Cf. Also H. L. Mencken's cynical and pessimistic (but entertaining) article on the trial: "In Tennessee," Nation, 121 (6/1/25), 21-2.

Also among the numerous enemies by whom beleaguered liberals felt themselves surrounded in the 1920's were the militarists. Most of the editors and writers of the journals believed to some degree in the revisionist explanation of the causes of World War I - an interpretation in which militarists and munitions makers played a large and villainous role. One way to prevent a reoccurrence of such a disastrous war, the journalists thought, was to counter at every point the efforts of those who sought to build up armaments and to maintain large military forces. Thus pacifist liberals denounced military influences in the press, business, politics, and education. Leanord Cline, for example, declared in the New Republic in 1921 that "in many of our schools soldier-making has become so important that youths who decline to shoulder muskets are [illegible] compelled to leave."[12] Croly, Bliven, and the other New Republic editors shared Cline's opposition to rearmament and to the use of the schools as instruments of militarism. But it was Villard - who had maintained his pacifism throughout the war - who spoke out most often and most vigorously against militarism. Time and again, through articles and editorials, he and his associates denounced the pernicious influence of the military in all areas of life. Villard, who had had a brief teaching career at Harvard, seemed particularly upset by the activities of the Reserve Officers Training Corps on college campuses and missed few opportunities to attack this program and its goals.[13]

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[11] Editorial, "The Baiting of Judge Raulston," New Republic, 43 (7/29/25), 249-50.

[12] Leanord Cline, "The War on the Peace Seekers," New Republic, 39 (6/2/24), 149.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has written of the New Republic: "Beginning hopefully in 1914 as the organ of a progressive majority in a progressive era, the magazine saw itself a decade later as the voice of a civilized minority in an era of Babbitts. Progressive idealism was now less a cause than a refuge."[14] The Nation too, sought to provide refuge for progressive idealists during the 1920's, and like its fellow journal found that among those most in need of protection were the students and teachers of America's schools and colleges. Thus in guarding education from the depradations of conservatives, businessmen, super-patriots, fundamentalists, and militarists both journals could see themselves as trying to preserve some of the social and educational gains of the Progressive Era, and as maintaining a beachhead from which a new reform effort might yet be launched. The liberal journalists recognized that the schools, like other institutions, tended to become the instruments of dominant forces in society. And, during the 1920's, when business, "Americanism," and conservatism were in the ascendancy, only the most unremitting vigilance could prevent the schools from losing whatever progressive gains they had already made. The journalists sought consistently to maximize the freedom and autonomy of the schools, believing that out of free inquiry would come a new and more powerful reformism and liberalism.

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[13] Cf. for example, the following editorials: "Sex and the R.O.T.C.," Nation, 128 (5/1/29), 523-4; "Henrietta Spills the Beans," Nation, 120 (4/22/25), 456-7; Editorial paragraph, Nation, 126 (1/18/28), 55. This last item quotes Dewey in opposition to militarism. The Nation's "Honor Roll for 1928" cited Harry F. Ward "for leadership, as president of the American Civil Liberties Union, in the fight against militarism in the American schools." (Also cited was John Dewey, "for seeing clearly and reporting justly in the New Republic, the Russia of today, and for continuous leadership in American Education.") v. 128 (1/9/29), 35. This annual "Honor Roll" is a fascinating index of the editors' gradually changing interests, enthusiasms and causes.

[14] Schlesinger, Jr., in Luce, ed., The Faces of Five Decades, p. 26.

III

The preceding analysis sets the stage for a brief response to the questions raised in the introductory chapter on the 1920's. Summarized briefly, these questions were: (1) Was education (particularly workers' schools) the recipient of some of the enthusiasm which Croly and others displaced from their earlier political interests? (2) What earlier educational concerns of the liberal journalists continued, were modified, or were dropped? What new educational interests developed? (3) What differences of opinion or of emphasis on educational matters existed between the two journals, and how were these related to broader policy differences? (4) What particular educational developments received the attention of the journals during the 1920's, and what impact - if any - did the journalists have upon educational matters? (5) Did the journals take sides in the "internal" educational disputes of the period between scientific, reformist, and child-centered elements of progressive education? (6) Did the educational writings of the journalists indicate any conflict between their liberalism and their support for intellectual values? (7) To what extent did the liberal journals try to supply social goals for the newer, more individually-oriented education?[15]

In response to the first question, it seems clear that education - along with other cultural interests - did receive much of the attention which Croly had previously devoted to largely political affairs. While he continued to comment on developments in government, he no longer looked for salvation through politics, and his enthusiasm was directed more toward change and reform at the individual level. Villard's active concern for politics, on the other hand, did not waver, but his journal did reflect the increasing interest of liberals in art, literature, culture and education. Thus the displacement of previous political interest might be a partial explanation of Croly's enthusiasm for worker education, but such an interpretation is not required in Villard's case. Perhaps the simplest way to account for the interest of both journals in labor education is to note that this was one of the few movements in the 1920's which seemed to offer hope of significant and fundamental change. Villard may have been more interested in the immediate political alliance which workers' education could help build between labor and intellectuals; Croly was probably less optimistic about this and looked to workers' education for more long-range individual regeneration.

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[15] Cf. pp. 107-9 above.

Secondly, as the above analysis would indicate, the shifting political and economic climate of the 1920's did promote changes in the educational concerns of the journals. As has been noted, some of the educational crusades of the 1910's were continued - notably the defense of academic freedom and the use of the schools as instruments of reform. But it is significant that journal concern for the efficiency movement in education was replaced in large part by the new interest in worker education. The efficiency movement had had its roots in the business and industrial world, particularly in the trend toward scientific management. Now, in the 1920's, business was in the saddle, and liberal intellectuals had new evidence that progress was not to be expected from that quarter. Their enthusiasm for workers' education provides at the least a convenient symbol for the new educational alliances which liberals sought to forge.[16]

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[16] Callahan includes the entire period from 1910 to 1929 as one in which the efficiency movement in education was powerful. The liberal journalists, however, had lost interest in it by the 1920's.

The third question, concerning the different emphases given by the two journals to various educational matters, has already been answered in part. It is clear, first of all, that the sheer quantity of educational commentary in the New Republic exceeded that in the Nation. Croly had a more personal and intense interest in educational matters than did Villard, and he was willing - as attested by the educational supplements which his journal carried during the decade - to devote more space to the topic. But there were at this time no fundamental disagreements between the journals on educational issues. Both defended the schools against attack, both promoted workers' schools, both gave a hearing to child-centered experiments. Any differences were ones of priority, of emphasis, of tone. Villard's priorities were still basically political, while Croly's had shifted to a deeper level; Villard's educational emphases continued to be reformist with a tinge of nostalgia for the traditional school, while Croly and his associates looked with more enthusiasm on the individualistic orientation of the new education; Villard's tone continued to be moralistic and polemical, while Croly's became more psychological and introspective. And in all of this it is apparent that the differences in the area of education were partial reflections of differences in personality and outlook between the two men and the journals through which they extended their influence.

The chapters on worker education and the child-centered school have already explored the dominant educational interests of the liberal journalists during the 1920's. As always, the effects of their writings and their work are most difficult to gauge. One can only say that partisans of both the workers' schools and the child-centered schools felt it was worth their time to write for these journals, and through them hopefully to build support for their programs. The journalists, for their part, no doubt hoped to guide both movements in what they saw as liberal directions. In this they were only partly successful: first, because their relationship to both trends was peripheral and they thus lacked directive power; secondly, because external events were of far more importance in shaping educational trends than was liberal rhetoric. A number of the journalists did actively involve themselves in workers' colleges, and they may have helped for a time to broaden and liberalize their programs. But workers' education suffered from the same bureaucratization and narrowness as the labor movement as a whole, and the declining interest of the journals in the labor colleges may be indicative of their discouragement with trends in American labor. When worker education did undergo something of a renaissance in the mid-1930's, the liberal journals gave it their support, but they no longer believed that it might become the cutting edge of a new reform movement.

The fifth question with which this section opened concerns journal involvement in the "internal" educational disputes of the period. It is clear that for the most part the Nation and the New Republic were looking at educational events from the outside. They saw tha schools, like the churches or the unions, as institutional instruments for liberal purposes. A few journal writers like Agnes de Lima did manage to penetrate beyond the institutional shell and to analyze insightfully some of those questions of methodology and psychology which occupied the attention of school personnel. And individual writers, like Margaret Naumberg and Boyd Bode, took strong positions concerning curricular and organizational trends in the schools. But the editors themselves sought to give expression to all viable viewpoints within (and occasionally outside) the progressive education movement. And when they did take sides, it was almost always to support the reformist tradition (as distinguished from the child-centered and scientific emphases) in the newer education.

The matter of anti-intellectualism has been dealt with in some detail above, and it only remains here to place it in the general perspective provided by this entire group of questions. Some writers for the New Republic - notably Margaret Naumberg and Caroline Pratt - did propose educational patterns which were at least superficially anti-intellectual. They and other promoters of the child-centered school, however, almost invariably claimed that this was a question of means, not ends; that a suspension or postponement of intellectual activity for young children would lead in the long run to a greater and more creative intellectuality. But the more authoritative voices of Joseph Hart, Boyd Bode, and John Dewey warned against false optimism or willful blindness on this problem, and insisted that progressive schools should restore mental development to its place of priority. And it is clear that the weight of editorial opinion on this topic lay with the defenders of intellectuality. It would seem then, that there was no fundamental conflict between the liberalism and the intellectualism of those who were most closely identified with the Nation and the New Republic: that to these men a thoughtless, unanalyzed liberalism was sterile and uncreative; but an illiberal and non-reformist intellectualism was pointless and undirected. The editors and their associates hoped that journalism, the schools, the unions, the churches, and other institutions might all contribute to the building of an increasingly rational and effective progressivism.

The conclusions stated above provide the necessary background for a response to the final question.

Probably the 1920's were the period when progressive education was more confused over its goals than at any other time. Before 1920 the reformist element was the most vocal, as it was again in the 1930's. During the 1940's, with the movement in decline, life-adjustment elements spoke with the loudest voice.[17] But during the 1920's, the scientific and the reformist groups continually vied for position with the missionaries of the child-centered school. The role of the liberal journals amidst this ideological struggle was to insist that a goal-less child-centered school was probably impossible, and certainly undesirable. Spokesmen for the Nation and the New Republic continually reminded representatives of the new education that they must look beyond the school, make decisions about the kind of society which was required, and then try to develop people capable of building and living in such a social order.

It is clear from studies by historians like Cremin and Cohen that such efforts were a partial failure; that the child-centered schools committed sins of pedagogical commission and teleological omission that helped undermine the whole progressive education movement. But it is unlikely that the criticism of the liberal journals was completely without effect. The Nation and the New Republic enjoyed continued prestige among progressive educators during the 1920's. They were widely read in liberal and educational circles, and their help was sought in the defense of academic freedom and in other matters concerning the schools. It is probable that the two journals - particularly through the writings of men like Dewey - exercised a restraining influence on the more frantic devotees of the child-centered school. Perhaps without their criticism and their reminders of the social goals of progressive education, the movement might have drifted even farther from its reformist foundations. Thus as the nation entered a new and more frightening decade, the Nation and the New Republic held still to their liberal belief in man's rationality and educability. If they were less optimistic and less naive on these matters than they had been before the War, they still held to the hope that an educative journalism and a creative school might yet be worthy instruments of a better social order.

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[17] Such a brief summary obviously glosses over countertrends within each of these periods. For a more extended analysis, cf. Cremin, Transformation, chapter 6.

PART IV: ACTIVE LIBERALISM REVIVES[1]
1930-1941

Chapter Eleven: Liberals Move Left

I

During the prosperity, conservatism, and complacency of the 1920's, the pessimistic warnings of American liberals had been all but drowned out by a barrage of boosterism. But the massive collapse of the stock market in late 1929 began a decade of depression which exceeded even the prophecies of the liberal Jeremiahs. After the crash, the nation slid rapidly into the most severe depression in its history. Neither Congress nor the President (whom the New Republic now referred to as "Humpty-Dumpty Hoover") could stem the tide of economic disaster which swept over the country.

President Hoover could hardly be held fully responsible for a depression based on years of economic mismanagement. But he could be - and was - blamed for his inadequate and ineffectual response to the crisis. Though he went farther than any earlier president in using federal power to try to stem the downturn, the demands of the situation far exceeded his response.[2] And whatever Hoover's precise degree of responsibility, the American people were in no mood to assess it. In November, 1932, they flocked to the polls to turn him out of office by a popular vote of 22,800,000 for Roosevelt against 15,750,000 votes for Hoover.[3]

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[1] The phrase "active liberalism revives" comes from John Dewey's article, "The American Intellectual Frontier," New Republic, 30 (5/10/22), 303. Dewey's phrase applies more appropriately to the decade of the 1930's.

Franklin Roosevelt, whom the electorate had chosen to replace Hoover, was at best an unknown quantity. Although he was identified with the liberal wing of the Democratic party and had built a progressive record as governor of New York, his campaign utterances in 1932 were often vague and contradictory.[4] In fact, the editors of the *New Republic*, though vigorously opposed to Hoover, could not bring themselves to support Roosevelt's candidacy. To these liberal intellectuals, the Democratic platform was a "mass of inconsistencies, a puny answer to the challenge of the times."

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[2] Cf. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), ch. 25, for a thorough analysis of Hoover's efforts to deal with the depression.

[3] William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper, 1963), p. 17. George Soule, one of the *New Republic*'s board of editors, wrote on the eve of the election: "The pity is that so many people should be voting merely against Mr. Hoover instead of for a change in the aims and methods of our economy." "On Blaming Hoover," *New Republic*, 72 (10/26/32), 279.

[4] As a New Republic editorial put it in September, 1932, "Roosevelt Steps Left and Right," *New Republic*, 72 (9/28/32), [illegible]-5. An accompanying editorial said in reference to Hoover: "A change to almost anybody else will come as justification for saying, in Shakespeare's words: 'For this relief, much thanks.'" "As Goes Maine," *New Republic*, 72 (9/28/32), 166.

The candidate and party were "an untried jockey on a very lame horse."[5]

The Nation had no higher opinion of Roosevelt. He had displayed "weak and vacillating leadership," and his campaign maneuvers showed that he had joined the "old guard of political sharpers." Under these circumstances both journals - though they recognized that he had no chance of victory - urged their readers to support the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas, for president.[6]

Thus the liberal journals entered the 1930's - as they had the 1920's - thoroughly estranged from the majoritarian politics of the Republican and Democratic parties. In fact, Al Smith in 1928 had been the only major party candidate supported by the journals since both had backed Wilson in

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[5] Editorial, "How Shall We Vote," New Republic, 72 (8/17/32), 5. Suspicion of Roosevelt was not new to the New Republic. A 1926 editorial, entitled "The Great Jefferson Joke," denounced Roosevelt's assertion of that year that "the salvation of the Democratic Party lies in the real acceptance of the Jeffersonian idea." The editors' prescription was "the reverse of Mr. Franklin Roosevelt's. Let the Democratic intellectual general staff forget about Jefferson for a few years and do a little twentieth century thinking for themselves." New Republic, 47 (6/9/26), 73. We may assume that Croly wrote this editorial, since criticizing Jefferson was one of his intellectual hobbies.

[6] Editorial, Nation, 135 (7/6/32), 1; "Governor Roosevelt's Campaign," Nation, 135 (11/2/32), 414. The New Republic's support for Thomas was stated in an editorial, "Voting for a Party," 72 (10/26/32), 272-4. Although the New Republic supported Thomas it occasionally became impatient with factionalism on the left. In an editorial entitled "Potting and Kettling," it suggested that if the Communists and Socialists didn't stop lying about one another radicals would "be inclined to cast a protest vote for Hoover." New Republic, 72 (10/5/32), 194.

1916.[7] In spite of their pre-election skepticism, however, both journals were at first pleasantly surprised by Roosevelt's vigorous attack on the depression. But when it became apparent that the early New Deal measures were not going to provide basic solutions to America's economic problems, both journals returned to the attack.[8] Until 1936 they continually berated the Administration for its caution, its unwillingness to make fundamental changes in the economic system, its reluctance to undertake large-scale national planning, and its general inadequacy in the face of the massive crisis.

Thus the journals found themselves moving inexorably leftwards. The combined effects of economic depression, a drastically altered political situation, and the apparent success of the Russian Five Year Plans, made a move towards collectivism seem eminently realistic. And these external events were reinforced by changes within the journals themselves. On January 1, 1933, Oswald Garrison Villard resigned his active editorship of the *Nation*, though he continued to contribute a weekly column until 1940. An editorial board consisting of Freda Kirchwey, Henry Hazlitt, Ernest Greuning, and Joseph Wood Krutch assumed direction of the magazine, with Kirchwey eventually emerging as the dominant figure.[9] As the restraining hand of Villard's more conventional liberalism was lifted, the Nation spoke out increasingly for collectivist solutions to America's problems. And in its strongly anti-Fascist, collective-security foreign policy, it often found itself allied in a united front with the Communists.[10] Although Villard deplored the increasing radicalism (and particularly the interventionism) of the Nation, he need not have been surprised. As early as 1927, R. L. Duffus had noted that in selecting personnel for the journal, Villard "purposefully chose men who were more radical than he was." He also reported Villard's jocular complaint that whenever he found it necessary to leave the Nation's offices for brief periods "the staff goes Bolshevist."[11]

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[7] In 1928 the *Nation* gave Smith and Thomas a split endorsement, while Villard voted for Thomas. The *New Republic* belatedly and grudgingly supported Smith. Cf. Carey McWilliams, "One Hundred Years of *The Nation*," *Journalism Quarterly*, 42 (Spring 1965), 195.

[8] Frank A. Warren, III, *Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 41 ff. This is the most recent and comprehensive treatment of the relationship of liberals to Communists during the 1930's.

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[9] Nation, 136 (1/4/33), 1, 34. Cf. also Richard Clarke Sterne, "The Nation and Its Century," Nation, 201 (9/20/65 - 100th Anniversary Issue), 308-14. Sterne's study of the Nation is the best yet available, although Michael Wreszin's Oswald Garrison Villard: Pacifist at War (Bloomington, Indiana, 1965) deals effectively with the journal under Villard's editorship.

The comings and goings during this period of various editors, publishers, and writers on both journals are meticulously traced in ch. 1 of James J. Martin's American Journalism and World Politics, 1931-41 (New York: Devin-Adair, 1965). Except for such factual data, this biased revisionist study is not useful. For a concise exposé of this "stupefying work" of "pseudo-scholarship," cf. Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s review in the New York Times Book Review (4/25/65), pp. 10, 12, 14.

[10] Wreszin, in chapters 13-15, shows Villard's increasing estrangement from the Nation, and Kirchwey's efforts to keep the peace among the mélange of pacifists, interventionists, collectivists, New Dealers, pragmatists, and ideologues who staffed the journal.

[11] Quoted in Wreszin, Villard, 130.

Like many liberals, the *Nation*'s editors were shaken and confused by the Moscow Purge trials of 1935-38, but not until after the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 23, 1939 did the journal break decisively with the united front foreign policy. This decade of sympathy with Communist causes was distressing to many *Nation* readers. As late as February, 1940, Henry Wallace felt it necessary to accompany his congratulations on the *Nation*'s 75th anniversary with the suggestion that the journal be "as critical of the doctrines and doctrinaires of the left as it has always been, and properly, of the doctrines and doctrinaires of the right." In the same issue, Norman Thomas expressed his opinion that the journal had abandoned its earlier critical standards "in favor of the 'democratic frontism' so popular among intellectuals." But he was happy to note that since the Hitler-Stalin Pact he had seen "something of a return of the magazine to its old critical standards."[12]

The *New Republic*, too, underwent internal changes which accentuated its leftward shift. Herbert Croly's stroke in 1928 and subsequent death in 1930 brought to an end his scholarly and forceful editorship of the journal. He also was succeeded by a collective editorship (or by an editorial collective, as right-wing critics would have it): Bruce Bliven,

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[12] Letters to the editor, *Nation*, 150 (2/10/40), 190.

George Soule, Malcolm Cowley, Robert M. Lovett, and Stark Young assumed direction of the journal, with Bliven as the guiding force. The journal was edited more democratically than had been the case under Croly and there was less uniformity between the editorial section of the journal and its other departments.[13] Thus while Bruce Bliven and George Soule were writing articles and editorials promoting a democratic collectivism, Malcolm Cowley was, in the words of Alfred Kazin, taking "the literary side of the *New Republic* in the direction of a sophisticated literary Stalinism . . ." In fact, while the journal itself editorially supported Norman Thomas for president in 1932 Cowley and Edmund Wilson (the previous literary editor) backed Foster and Ford, the Communist candidates.[14]

One major difference between the journals during this period should be noted, however. While the *Nation* joined the Communists in adopting a collective-security policy against the threat of Fascism, the *New Republic* editors - who deeply regretted their support of World War I - maintained a non-interventionist foreign policy until 1940. Thus, ironically,

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[13] Bruce Bliven, interview with author, August 28, 1965.

[14] Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left* (New York, 1965; first published in 1961), 99, 213-15, 437. Some pro-Communists were sensitive to the variety of views within the *New Republic*. One wrote: "Distinction should be made between the editorial policies of the Nation and New Republic, which are quite dangerous and the independent contributions and book reviews, which often contain revolutionary content." Quoted in Aaron, *Writers*, p. 263; Alfred Kazin, *Starting Out in the Thirties* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), p. 16. Cf. also pages 66, 138, and 141.

Villard's foreign policy views were closer to those of the rival New Republic than to those of the Nation to which he had given so much of his energy.[15]

But in spite of this difference over foreign policy, both journals showed much sympathy for Soviet Russia, vigorously attacked the failures and excesses of capitalism, supported extensive national planning (partly on the model of the Russian Five Year Plans), and gave a hearing to authors who proposed Marxist solutions for American problems. Such policies opened the New Republic to charges from Benjamin Stolberg that it was "merely a 'liberal' echo of the New Masses." But more accurate was the ambiguity reflected by Time magazine, which on the occasion of the New Republic's twenty-fifth anniversary referred to the journal both as a "pinko weekly" and as moving "straight along its New Deal course."[16] In fact, from 1936 to 1939 the Nation and the New Republic managed to live up to both of these descriptions. This was the heyday of the Popular Front, when even the Communists, out of their fear of Fascism, were backing

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[15] Wreszin, Villard, p. 240. For Villard's rather poignant valedictory column, see "Issues and Men," Nation, 150 (6/29/40), 782. Bliven has expressed his regret that he remained a pacifist so long. Interview with author, August 28, 1965.

[16] Benjamin Stolberg, "Muddled Millions," Saturday Evening Post, 213 (2/15/41), 82; "Liberals," Time, 34 (11/13/39), 21-2. In spite of their drift towards Marxism, Lillian Symes' comment on the journals in the 1920's applies nearly as well to the 1930's. She declared that the Nation and New Republic had "taken their revolution vicariously." Quoted in Aaron, Writers, 347.

Roosevelt.[17] The liberal journals thus found themselves for a few years in the position of being able at one and the same time to support Roosevelt against his conservative enemies, snipe at the New Deal for not going far enough, and to enjoy a unity on the left which the temporary moderation of the Communists made possible. The fact that Roosevelt in the "second hundred days" in 1936 had moved his administration leftward and had forced the enactment of a substantial body of progressive legislation, made it easier for both the Communists and for their liberal allies to support Roosevelt.[18] By placing themselves within Roosevelt's camp, but on the far left fringes of it, liberal journalists enabled themselves to take positions such as Heywood Broun's: "I am an ardent New Dealer but with the reservation that in my opinion Mr. Roosevelt and his policies are by far too conservative."[19]

In spite of this decided move towards collectivism, Bliven, Kirchwey, and their colleagues still had much in common with Croly and Villard: they continued to be idealistic, non-doctrinaire, and pragmatic. But the apparently paradoxical step they had taken - which Villard and probably Croly would have avoided - was to enter into a pragmatic alliance with non-pragmatic, doctrinaire Communists.[20] However, in spite of their participation in the Popular front, Bliven and Kirchwey never permitted their journals to become uncritical allies of the Communists, and they never editorially supported Communist candidates for major office. But the shattering experience of the Great Depression did make a profound impression on them. It deepened their convictions concerning the failures of capitalism and heightened their sympathy for what they persisted in calling the "Russian experiment." It dulled their sensitivity to the redeeming features of the American polity and economy as well as to the negative features of Communism. Bruce Bliven's characterization of American liberals of the 1930's can well be applied to both journals: "The innocents of those days were certainly naive; they were gullible; they were very slow to face the changing facts of history. It is also true however that they were miles away from supporting dictatorship, rule by torture and the building of a whole society on falsehood."[21]

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[17] Warren, Liberals and Communism, p. 46.

[18] Cf. Leuchtenberg, Roosevelt, chapter 7: "The Second Hundred Days."

[19] Quoted in Warren, Liberals and Communism, p. 115.

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[20] Villard, of course, was alive and vigorously protesting the Popular Front; the trend of Croly's thought at the end of life make it more than likely that he would have been, like Dewey, an anti-Communist liberal.

[21] Bruce Bliven, "The First Forty Years," *New Republic*, 131 (11/22/54 - 40th Anniversary Issue), 9. These alliances were made easier by the fact that during the mid-1930's the Communists de-emphasized their doctrinaire radicalism in the Popular Front effort. With Communism being promoted as "Twentieth-century Americanism," it is not surprising that its sphere of influence sometimes over-lapped with that of the non-Communist radicals. Cf. Aaron, *Writers*, 166-ff. on "The Appeal of Communism."

II

The Nation and the New Republic, though (or possibly because) they became more radical during the 1930's, continued to exert their influence on the liberal intellectual community. Indeed, there are indications that their impact on the public mind may have increased somewhat. In spite of the severity of the economic contraction, the circulation of both journals gained slightly. The estimated circulation of the New Republic was at 27,000 during the late 1920's, but dropped to 12,000 in 1929 - perhaps because of a loss of Croly's personal following after his stroke and withdrawal from active editorial work. The stock market crash came late in the year, but it too may have affected total circulation somewhat. The journal soon regained its normal readership of 25,000 however, and then near the end of the decade began a climb to the 1940 figure of over 31,000. The Nation's circulation curve followed a somewhat different pattern. During the mid-twenties this journal went to about 30,000 readers, but by 1927 this figure rose to 42,000. Then in the early 1930's circulation settled at about 35,000, followed by an all-time high of 38,147 in the election year of 1936.[22]

Such increases are slight, of course, but they take on greater significance when one remembers that most periodicals suffered serious circulation declines during this period. Bruce Bliven's explanation of this phenomenon in the case of the New Republic perhaps provides part of the answer for both journals:

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[22] Cf. appendix for circulation figures for both journals, 1914-41.

> As the banks locked their doors and the breadlines lengthened, more and more people turned to a serious facing of reality and away from the synthetic optimism, the false jauntiness that most of the high-circulation magazines still felt obligated to assume. When the readership of these magazines plummeted, that of the NR remained steady or rose.[23]

Circulation is at best, of course, a doubtful measure of influence, but students of journalism agree that the Nation and the New Republic continued to wield, through their intellectual readership, a power far greater than mere numbers would indicate. This is, of course, a hard matter on which to find proof. One cannot demonstrate conclusively that readers were actually swayed or confirmed in their ideas or actions because of what they read in these journals. But one can show that numbers of important people believed themselves and others to have been so influenced. The New Republic's 25th anniversary in 1939 and the 75th anniversary of the Nation a year later gave American leaders the opportunity to testify to that effect.

To celebrate its quarter century of success, the New Republic gave a birthday party for its staff, writers, supporters and friends. In attendance, according to Time magazine, were

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[23] Bliven, "The First Forty Years," 9.

"free traders, isolationists, progressive educators, single taxers, practicing Marxists, disillusioned Marxists, poets, professors, publishers, all who believe themselves to be liberals, all who thus claim to fit into a category that nobody has satisfactorily defined."[24] The journal also received the good wishes of influential people in letters which were proudly printed in its columns. Messages came from men active in government, like Henry Wallace, Thomas Corcoran, Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, and Senator Barkley. Speaking for writers and editors were Sherwood Eddy, Bennet Cerf, Stuart Chase, Arthur Krock, Van Wyck Brooks, and a host of their colleagues. Ickes, who had subscribed since the first issue, declared that the New Republic had served liberals and progressives as a "steady beacon, a staunch friend, and an ever-ready defender of enlightened causes." He added, "I think I speak for all of us liberals when I say that I do not know what we would have done without the stimulation of the New Republic." Sherwood Eddy described the journal as "a national institution," and praised it for being "always fresh, vigorous, stimulating, independent, progressive; always liberal, sometimes radical." And true to the spirit of the decade, he added: "I would rather see you always radical and sometimes liberal."[25]

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[24] "Liberals," Time, 34 (11/13/39), 21.

[25] Letters to editor, New Republic, 101 (11/8/39), III.

When, a year later, the Nation celebrated its 75th year of publication, it carried a similarly impressive series of letters from American opinion leaders. Congratulatory messages were received from President Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, George Norris, Herbert Lehman, Henry Wallace, Josephus Daniels, Thurman Arnold, and others active in government. Norris, who had read the journal for many years, wrote: "I should be happy if I knew that its voice could be heard at every fireside in America." Daniels praised the "independence, fearlessness, and ability of the Nation," and described it as "an influential agency in an era when leadership without strings is the hope of a drifting world."

Editors, writers, and other opinion-shapers similarly attested to the Nation's influence and importance. Among those sending their good wishes to the journal were William Allen White, George Gallup, Roger Baldwin, H. V. Kaltenborn, Raymond Gram Swing, and Norman Thomas. White was lavish in his praise, claiming that the Nation had been his "guide, philosopher, and friend." He added: "For me it has interpreted the news and often even its opinions are news." Kaltenborn, one of the period's most influential news commentators, asserted that "the Nation should be required reading for every opinion-maker."[26]

These men may, of course, have deceived themselves, or perhaps have been too kind to their friends who staffed the journals. But in the absence of firm data on the proven influence of these journals, one can only accept their testimony at face value. A group of distinguished and thoughtful Americans stated their belief that the Nation and the New Republic had made significant contributions to their own thinking and to that of the liberal community at large. We may assume that this judgment was correct.

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[26] Nation, 150 (1/27/40), 112; (2/3/40), 139; (2/10/40), 190-91. Cf. also the letters from Norman Thomas and Henry Wallace, cited above, p. 3.

III

As the country underwent a severe depression, as the public and the various levels of government became increasingly liberal, and as the Nation and the New Republic became more radical, what changes occurred in the educational concerns of the journals? Not surprisingly, as the liberal weeklies took new positions on politics, economics, literature, and the arts, they evolved correspondingly different attitudes toward some developments in the educational world. Several questions will be of particular significance in the chapters which follow:

1) How did the journals deal with the effects of the Depression on schools and colleges? What analysis did they give to the particular effects of the economic crisis on students, minority groups, teachers, and professors?

2) What was the response of the Nation and the New Republic to the increasing federal involvement in education? In particular, what positions did they take on the educational work of such programs as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration? What aspects of these programs were of special concern to the liberal journalists?

3) What kind of treatment did the liberal weeklies give to educators' economic difficulties during this decade? How did they handle the various attacks on academic freedom which also characterized the period? As the union movement gained increasing strength among some parts of the teaching profession, and as Communist influence in the unions grew and then declined, what was the response of the Nation and the New Republic?

4) How did the journals deal with the similar rise of the radical student movement during the 1930's and with the growth of Communist influence within that movement?

5) How did the above developments relate to the increasing educational radicalism of men like George Counts? Did the journals espouse his or other varieties of quasi-Marxist educational thought? Did the three groups defined by Frank Warren - fellow travelers, Russian sympathizers, and anti-Communist liberals - (all of which spoke through the Nation and the New Republic), express varying educational

positions?[27] Did the educational material in the journals change in response to the Roosevelt administration's political shifts during the decade? Was the growth of the Popular Front movement after 1935 reflected in journal educational policies?

The above questions will not all be answered in equal detail. Some of the topics, like government youth programs and teacher unions, will be analyzed rather extensively, while others will be considered more briefly in the summary chapter. But the material which follows, dealing with a new economic and political era, new editors, and new educational concerns, should enable the reader to view selected educational developments of the 1930's through the unique perspective provided by the liberal journals.

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[27] Warren, Liberals and Communism, pp. 65-69.

Chapter Twelve: The Assault on the Schoolhouse[1]

During the 1930's, the massive, inescapable fact of life for Americans of all political persuasions was the economic depression. The *Nation* and the *New Republic*, as reporters and interpreters of events for their liberal intellectual audiences, inevitably devoted much attention to the effects of the depression on all areas of existence - on jobs, wages, housing, politics, literature, and, of course, on education.

As has been indicated throughout this study, the editors, writers, and readers of the liberal journals had more than a passing concern for educational matters[2] Many in the group were professors, teachers, and students, and some were active in educational associations and activities. Most of them saw schools and colleges as institutions of central importance in the development of a better society. Thus one need not wonder that the journals gave considerable attention to the impact of economic contraction on many aspects of education - on public and private schools, on educational budgets, on colleges and universities, on educational opportunities for depressed groups such as Negroes and Southern whites, on students, and particularly on teachers and professors.[3]

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[1] The chapter title is that of a *Nation* editorial in defense of the schools: 137 (8/16/33), 173.

[2] **Both journals continually ran advertising directed at students and teachers. See, for example, the advertisement** which the *New Republic* ran in the *Nation* in 1937, headed "Teachers!": "Since 1914 the editors of the *New Republic*, and its contributors - such men as Herbert Croly, Professor John Dewey, Professor Charles A. Beard - have been foremost among those who have put their shoulders against stiff academic walls and pushed them open. An important part of the audience of the weekly *New Republic* is composed of teachers and students . . ."

A *Nation* advertisement entitled "In the Classroom," described the journal as "a living textbook" and as "indispensable to the intelligent student eager to understand the life of his time." *Nation*, 137 (10/4/33), 392. Both journals offered special rates to students.

I

The stock market crash which initiated the Depression occurred in October 1929, but since school budgets had already been established, educational spending for 1929-30 held up well in most parts of the country. In fact, total public school expenditures reached $2,316,000,000 - a figure which would not be exceeded again until 1940.[4] But in a few areas where tax structures were weak and municipal finances shaky, the schools did begin to suffer. The Nation noted in February, 1930 the difficulties experienced in Chicago, where teachers and other public employees were going unpaid, and where the city could not afford to buy coal to heat the schools. A month later "The Drifter" reported that over half the schools in one Georgia county had been closed because funds for teachers' pay had been exhausted.[5]

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[3] Because of the journals' particular concern with the plight of teachers and professors, this topic will be dealt with separately in chapter 14.

[4] The figures are from the United States Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 209.

School budgets declined only slightly during the next academic year, but in 1931-32 per pupil spending dropped by over five percent and the next year it fell by another ten percent.[6] In February, 1933 the Nation noted that in four states over half the rural schools had shut down, that sixty cities had closed their evening classes, and that 145 had abandoned kindergartens.[7] Former editor O. G. Villard (now a contributing editor) reported from Oregon that many rural schools in that state had closed for the year at Christmas.[8]

During the 1933-1934 year, the schools hit bottom. While enrollments reached their peak for the decade, the number of teachers, average teacher salaries, total expenditures, and per pupil costs reached their lowest points.[9] A *Nation* editorial reported on this alarming situation, noting that while the Depression had forced the closing of only forty American schools by November, 1932, a year and a half later the figure had soared to over 40,000. Average per pupil expenditures had dropped from over ninety dollars in 1930 to about sixty-six dollars in 1934. Sales of textbooks had dropped by thirty percent. During the preceding school year Alabama had closed 85% of all its schools.

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[5] Editorial, Nation, 130 (2/5/30), 140; "In the Driftway," Nation, 130 (3/5/30), 270.

[6] Wayne W. Parrish, "The Plight of Our School System," The Literary Digest, 116 (9/23/33), 32.

[7] Editorial, Nation, 136 (1/18/33), 60-61. For general background on the Depression and education, see I. L. Kandel, American Education in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 51 ff.; Adolph E. Meyer, An Educational History of the American People (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 318 ff; 346-50; 357-8; Harry Zeitlin, "Federal Relations in American Education, 1933-1943, (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), ch. II.

[8] Villard, "The Plight of Higher Education," Nation, 138 (3/28/34), 349.

The ominous aspect of the whole trend was, to the *Nation*'s editors, the fact that educational budgets were being cut much more drastically than government spending in general. In Chicago, for example, the school budget for 1933 was slashed by about 35%, while the average cut in municipal spending was only about 10%:

> Because the children could not answer back, because their parents perhaps did not realize the gravity of the situation, and because the school teachers were helpless in the face of direct threats to their jobs, local budgets have made cuts in the school funds out of all proportion to the general budgetary cuts.[10]

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[9] Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, pp. 207-9.

[10] Editorial, "Our Public Schools," *Nation*, 138 (4/18/34), 431-2. Cf. also editorial notes in v. 136 (2/1/33), 107; v. 141 (9/11/35), 283. Denny Hammond's *New Republic* article, "Education on the Skids," surveys the whole problem from the perspective of 1939, and includes a consideration of the effects of the 1937-38 recession, 99 (7/26/39), 326-7.

II

Again and again the *Nation* indignantly reported to its readers on the educational disaster sure to befall the country unless the budget-cutters were stopped. The *New Republic*, on the other hand, seemed more concerned about the damage being done in specific areas and to particular groups. In 1935, for example, that journal carried an article by Harold Ward on "The Poverty Belt" - the area of the Southern mountains now referred to as Appalachia. He reported that in 1930 the area had suffered from adult illiteracy rates of ten or twelve percent. Schools were having difficulty rectifying the situation, for in many areas fewer than a quarter of third-grade pupils reached high school. (The national average at the time was seventy percent.) And those tragic statistics could not have improved during "five years of acute depression."[11]

The same issue of the *New Republic* carried a review by Martha Gruening of Ella Enslow's book, *Schoolhouse in the Foothills*. Miss Enslow had taught for some time in the Tennessee backcountry and reported on her experience as "teacher, attorney, financier, nurse ... and preacher to the community." Conditions in the Southern mountains were bad enough in "normal" times, but Miss Greuning was most disturbed that "five years of depression and two of drought, meant half-starved children coming to school or staying away because they hadn't clothes or shoes to come in."[12]

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[11] Harold Ward, "The Poverty Belt," *New Republic*, 84 (10/2/35), 212-13. Ward would have needed state-by-state figures to prove his point concerning enrollments. Actually, on a nation-wide basis, the picture was ambiguous. Elementary enrollments fell somewhat until 1938, while high school enrollments increased from 4½ million in 1929 to 6 million in 1935. Cf. Dixon Wecter, *The Age of the Great Depression* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 180, 188.

Another group whose educational opportunities were particularly hard-hit were the Negroes. The Nation, true to the traditions of its founder, E. L. Godkin, took a particular interest in the problems of that group. The journal had long supported equal education as a major path to progress for Negroes, and now its writers and editors could not avoid seeing the special difficulties which the Depression made for Negro schools. In an analysis of the effects of the economic downturn on American teachers, Eunice Langdon described the problems of unemployment, of non-payment of salaries, of crowded classes, of inadequate materials, and of actual hunger and deprivation which assailed instructional staffs throughout the country. And she added that it was "a safe assumption that in those States and counties which normally spend from three to sixty times as much on their white as on their colored schools, the sufferings of the Negro school teachers and of the Negro school population have been proportionately heavier."[13]

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[12] Martha Gruening, review of Schoolhouse in the Foothills, (by Ella Enslow in collaboration with Alvin F. Harlow), New Republic, 84 (10/2/35), 223.

On the concern over the educational situation in the Southern mountains cf. also a letter from Agnes Sailer soliciting support for play schools conducted in West Virginia by the Pioneer Youth of America, New Republic, 84 (10/2/35), 223.

Three years later Oswald Villard gave the problem more searching attention in an article entitled "Slumbering Fires in Harlem." The previous March there had been a serious riot in Harlem and Mayor LaGuardia had appointed a commission to investigate the conditions in that part of New York City. Villard's article, essentially a summary and interpretation of the Commission's report, devoted about a fourth of its space to school conditions. The educational problems which he described had, of course, long histories, but all had been accentuated by the Depression. No elementary schools had been built in Harlem since 1924, during the period of greatest Negro in-migration. Since many Southern Negro schools had been closed during the Depression, some parents had "recklessly shipped their children to friends or relatives or even speaking acquaintances in the North in the hope that they would be taken in and educated." Such children added to overcrowded conditions in which schools were forced to conduct double and sometimes triple sessions. More than half the grade schools had between forty and fifty students in each class.

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[13] Eunice Langdon, "The Teacher Faces the Depression," *Nation*, 137 (8/16/33), 182. For evidence of the journals' commitment to equal educational opportunity for Negroes see "It Seems to Heywood Broun," *Nation*, 129 (7/17/29), 591. See also editorial notes in the *Nation*, 132 (4/22/31), 439; and 149 (12/9/39), 639. See the *New Republic*, 84 (10/2/35) for that journal's concern over the treatment of the Negro in textbooks.

Villard cited the particular case of one boy whose teacher "discovered that he was half-fainting from hunger' and had not had sufficient food for three days." Such cases dramatized a situation in which schools were not only affected directly by economic stringency, but also indirectly, as the families of their students suffered unemployment and hunger.[14]

III

It was evident to the liberal journalists that the Depression was hitting hardest at the educational opportunities of those groups, like Negroes and Southern whites, at the lower end of the economic scale. But this fact did not diminish the editors' concern for the state of higher education. Both journals considered themselves as organs of the liberal intellectual group, whose chief base of operations was the university. And both assigned to college-trained intellectuals a role in reform far out of proportion to their numbers. Thus the New Republic wrote in 1933:

> Unemployment and destitution of the intellectual worker have a graver significance than the plight of a class. In this world, where factories, schools, hospitals and even political parties and labor unions cannot be operated without the

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[14] Villard, "Slumbering Fires in Harlem," Nation, 142 (1/22/36), 99-100.

Cf. also "Louisiana's Black Utopia," by Carleton Beals and Abel Plenn, Nation, 141 (10/30/35), 503-5. The authors reported that school sessions had declined twenty days in white schools and one hundred days in Negro schools.

> knowledge of experts, we rarely visualize their real importance. They hold the keys for the functioning of our complicated world. They interpret past events and draw the lines for the future. Invention, education, propaganda, organization, come through them to the masses.[15]

In February, 1933, just at the end of Hoover's term in office, the Nation was vigorously resisting the efforts of state agencies to cut the budgets of colleges and universities. The editors were particularly indignant when a liberal institution like the University of North Carolina came under attack. Under the enlightened leadership of Frank Graham, this had become a university which "in the productivity of its scholars, in its public spirit, in its service to its State, is certainly unexcelled by any similar institution." Nonetheless, the budget bureau of North Carolina was proposing a 20 percent cut in appropriations, which would have meant a total decline of 56 percent from 1929 spending. The editors advised North Carolina authorities to follow the example of New York Governor Lehman, who had recently refused to knuckle under to business efforts to cripple the "great educational machine" of his state.[16]

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[15] Editorial, "From Campus to Breadline," New Republic, 75 (5/17/33), 7. The most thorough contemporary study of this problem was made by Committee Y of the American Association of University Professors, whose report was published as Depression, Recovery, and Higher Education, drafted by Malcolm M. Willey (New York: McGraw Hill, 1937). The particular problems of college instructors will be considered in Chapter 14 along with those of teachers.

This editorial set the pattern for much of the journals' comment on the depression and higher education: it coupled a defense of universities with praise for their champions and indictments of the businessmen, conservatives, and "low tax ideologists" who threatened to cripple them financially.[17] But the liberal weeklies occasionally carried more dispassionate analyses of the problems of higher education. During 1933 and 1934 the Nation ran one of the longest series in its history - a succession of thirteen articles on the Depression and the professions. In the third article, William B. Thomas considered the impact of the Depression on the college instructor, and pointed out that by 1932 "the depression (had) caught up with the universities," particularly the tax-supported institutions. He provided figures on numerous institutions, noting that university general funds had declined between 1931-32 and 1933-34 anywhere from 6.9 percent to 53 percent in the two-year period.[18]

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[16] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 136 (2/1/33), 107. At least one educator, Robert Hutchins, while pointing out the negative effects of the Depression on the colleges, felt that it provided opportunities for reorganization as well. Cf. his article "Hard Times and the Higher Learning," The Yale Review, 22 (Summer, 1933), 714-30. He has recently restated this position in regard to the University of Chicago in his assertion that the "Great Depression conferred marked benefits upon the university, for it forced a reconsideration of the whole enterprise." "First Glimpses of a New World," Saturday Review (12/4/65), 34.

[17] Cf. also Villard, "The Plight of Higher Education," Nation, 138 (3/28/34), 349.

[18] William B. Thomas, "The College Instructor," Nation, 137 (8/23/33), 213-15. The series ran intermittently from 8/9/23 through 1/17/34.

Later in that same school year, Oswald Villard took a trip through the western United States, visiting a number of colleges and universities along the way. In March, 1934, he wrote from Portland, Oregon on "The Plight of Higher Education." Using the University of Oregon as a typical example of this plight, he reported that the school's enrollment had dropped by a third, that some faculty salaries had been halved, and that the library (which Villard's father had endowed fifty years earlier) lacked funds even for very important new books.

Villard was impressed, however, by the determination of students to continue their education in the face of severe deprivation, and spoke of one "whose work improved enormously when it was arranged that he could get one square meal a day." He declared that "somebody ought to call President Roosevelt's attention to the dire distress of so many of our schools of higher learning, which ought to be the most cherished institutions in our entire national life." And he concluded, in his best polemical style, with his usual coupling of pacifism and reformism:

> It is an infernal outrage in this national emergency to approve a bill for the expenditure of $500,000,000 for warships when the price of even two battleships expended upon our universities would bring hope and cheer, yes, decent sustenance, to students and teachers on a thousand campuses. Can there be any question which expenditure would really make for the true preparedness of this country for the tasks and dangers and infinitely difficult problems of the future?[19]

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[19] Villard, Nation, v. 138, p. 349. This relationship between pacifism and "educationism," so characteristic of the social philosophies of Villard and many other liberals, was not accidental. Both views rested on the assumption that men were rational enough to be taught, trained, and persuaded to act humanely and that coercion and violence were self-defeating and unnecessary.

But the journals' concern for colleges and their students did not stop at the point at which the graduates received their degrees. In a depressed labor market many graduates found that their hard-won A.B.'s granted them only the dubious privilege of moving, as the *New Republic* put it, "from campus to breadline." An editorial by that title in 1933 called attention to the difficulty experienced by recent college graduates in finding employment. New engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals all found little call for their services. Sixty-two percent of the engineers graduating in June, 1932, for example, had not found jobs by the following December. The editors saw clearly how this "professional depression" related to the general economic situation:

> Overproduction of trained minds among millions of illiterates, destitute physicians among hundreds of thousands who die without medical care, is neither more nor less a paradox than having too much bread, too many shoes, too much of everything when people go hungry and in rags.[20]

The *Nation* was similarly cognizant of the situation and agreed that it was "wasteful and degrading to train scholars and professionals for posts which they will not be able to find. But it took issue with James Conant's proposed solution: a cut in college enrollments. It could not agree that the time had come for "planned contraction" in the universities. Instead, the editors believed that:

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[20] Editorial, "From Campus to Breadline," *New Republic*, 75 (5/17/33), 6-7.

> The fate of American university graduates must be integrated with a program of expansion throughout American society. Our "surplus" of graduates is a measure of the chaos in our economy rather than a sign that their services are not needed. Dr. Conant's recognition of the problem is courageous; his solution is as dangerous as it is evasive.[21]

The graduates themselves were not totally passive in this paradoxical situation. Some of the more radical among them sought joint action to deal with the problem. Under the leadership of Joseph Lash of the City College of New York, an Association of Unemployed College Alumni was formed. Like many of the other student and ex-student organizations of the period it attempted through publicity and protest to call attention to the difficulties of its members and to press for government action on their behalf. The liberal weeklies occasionally reminded their readers of this situation by printing correspondence from such groups. Thus only six weeks before the editorial cited above, the *New Republic* carried a letter from Lash's organization inviting interested persons to a Washington conference on the problem. The letter made the quite unwarranted assertion that "college graduates and the professional classes in general have been the group most severely affected in this depression," but then went on moderately enough to call on the federal government for "significant unemployment relief and

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[21] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 146 (2/5/38), 143. For a much less restrained critique of Conant, see the Communist *New Masses*, 10 (2/6/34), 4. This editorial includes a sweeping indictment of the capitalist system "which has no jobs for its college graduates."

. . . more permanent remedial measures."[22]

The Roosevelt administration did undertake some programs, such as the National Youth Administration, which benefited students, their colleges, and their professors. And as broader New Deal programs began to ease the whole economic situation somewhat by 1936, employment prospects for graduates began to improve. The New Republic then temporarily abandoned its doom-saying and reported that "a much larger proportion of young people going out from schools and colleges now are able to find employment."[23]

But this uncharacteristic optimism was short-lived, and it soon became clear that even the best efforts of the New Deal could not alleviate the situation entirely. The economy went into a recession in late 1937, and again the following June the New Republic was lamenting "the season when several hundred thousand college graduates are pushed off into the open ocean. The icy plunge was always frightening, but in recent years there has been an added trouble - the sea of employment hasn't nearly enough room for them." The continued existence of this problem was an indictment not only of the general political and economic system, but of the colleges and universities which should provide society with criticism and with innovative ideas. Thus the editors proposed half-seriously:

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[22] "A Call to Unemployed College Graduates," (Letter from Joseph Lash and others), New Republic, 74 (4/5/33), 218. Cf. also "Scholars on Relief," (letter from D. R. Fuss, secretary of the Associated Office and Professional Emergency Employees), New Republic, 83 (8/21/35), 49.

[23] Editorial, "Graduates of 1936," New Republic, 87 (6/17/36), 164. The A. A. U. P. report, Depression, Recovery, and Higher Education, cited above, has a thorough survey of federal programs for higher education through 1936. Cf. pages 372-87.

> It might be a good thing for the universities to get together and resolve that it is foolish to go on educating young men and women for whom the world has no use; that it would be better to shut up shop for a while and turn their staffs and endowments loose on the problem of why the world does not take fuller advantage of what they have to offer.[24]

IV

For the liberal journalists, deeply sensitive to the impact of the Depression on all areas of life, one of the most irritating circumstances of the time was the blithe way in which many educational institutions succeeded in ignoring both the state of the economy and the embarrassing questions which were being raised about the viability of the whole American enterprise. The New Republic, concerned about the lack of opportunity for college graduates, asked whether the universities could "just shrug their black-gowned shoulders and say it is not their business."[25] It was appalled that American education was "still based, in the main, on the rags and tatters of the education deemed appropriate for the English landed gentry of several centuries ago." This anachronistic education, further emasculated by right-wing attacks on academic freedom, produced appallingly few students "who understood the sickness of our society and are prepared to fight for a cure."[26]

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[24] Editorial, "Baccalaureate," New Republic, 95 (6/22/38) 171.

[25] New Republic, v. 95, p. 171.

Villard, too, was angry at the failure of educational institutions to grapple with the problems raised by the economic crisis. He recalled that during the World War it had hot been "considered ridiculous then to rebuild the whole life of the universities and colleges around the business of teaching youth to go overseas and slaughter fellow human beings." He proposed that now, in similar fashion (but for better ends), "the entire life of the university should be built around the existing economic crisis; that the first function of such an institution should be to keep the students and the faculty currently aware of the momentous changes that are going on in our economic, social and political life."[27]

But Villard's was a voice from outside the educational world, as well as from an older generation. Even more impressive, because it came from one of the "victims" of schooling, was the testimony of Jon Cheever. During his junior year at

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[26] "Graduates of 1936," New Republic, 87 (6/17/36), 164-5.

[27] Villard, "The Plight of Higher Education," Nation, 138 (3/28/34), 349. A commencement editorial four years later criticized the irrelevance and conservatism of colleges which, ignoring the needs of the world around them, still continued to turn out "industrial chieftains, talented union-busters, tired business men, literary vassals, and the hosts of little, ambitious men who have sought so earnestly to mimic the big shots." "What Every Young Man Should Know," Nation, 146 (6/18/38), 688.

Thayer Academy in Massachusetts, Cheever was expelled because of his low grades. Then, at the age of seventeen, he wrote one of the most perceptive and sensitive articles on education which that journal had carried since the days of Randolph Bourne. He reproduced, in the words of the editors, "the atmosphere of an institution where education is served out dry in cakes, like pemmican." Cheever described the fatuous headmaster, the conformist faculty, the dessicated curriculum. And he derided the social and economic prejudices which characterized the institution during the first year of the Depression:

> Our country is the best country in the world. We are swimming in prosperity and our President is the best president in the world. We have larger apples and better cotton and faster and more beautiful machines. This makes us the greatest country in the world. Unemployment is a myth. Dissatisfaction is a fable. In preparatory school America is beautiful . . . .[28]

V

These, then, were the terms in which the liberal journals reported and analyzed the effects of the Depression on America's schools and colleges. They sought to alert their readers to the full range of difficulties experienced by educational institutions of all types and in all parts of the country. They worried their readers about declining educational budgets, over-crowded schools, and shortened school terms. They decried the special impact of the depression on higher education and on educational opportunities for Negroes and Southern Whites. And they noted the irony of a situation in which schools and colleges sought to ignore the financial disaster which was undermining their own work and effectiveness.

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[28] Jon Cheever, "Expelled," New Republic, 64 (10/1/30), 171, 174. Cheever, who has become a distinguished American novelist, now spells his first name John. He never continued his formal education after his expulsion from Thayer.

The policies which the journals proposed and supported for dealing with this crisis will be analyzed in the chapters which follow. But in considering these proposals, it is important to keep in mind the depth of feeling which the journalists had on this topic. These convictions were indicated in a Nation editorial which asserted that "nothing could be more dangerous for the future of the country than the failure to maintain even our present inadequate educational standards."[29] This expressed a solid commitment to education and a concern for its preservation and improvement. But it was tepid in comparison to the rhetoric unloosed by the editors against those school boards and their conservative business allies who used the Depression as an excuse to cut educational budgets:

> Of all the disastrous consequences of the depression, this assault on the coming generation's chance to secure a modicum of education is the most damnable. These would-be tax-slackers are public enemies who, while patrioteering at every opportunity, are themselves as unpatriotic a brood as exist in our society.

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[29] Editorial Paragraph, Nation, 141 (9/11/35), 283.

> They should be scourged from their positions of authority and influence by a wrathful public opinion, and education should not only be restored to its former place, but lifted to a new level of efficiency, dignity, and freedom.[30]

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[30] Editorial, "The Assault on the Schoolhouse," Nation, 137 (8/16/33), 173.

Chapter Thirteen: . "A New Deal for Youth"[1]

The Great Depression was a nationwide - indeed, a worldwide - phenomenon. Municipalities and states soon exhausted their abilities to deal with the overwhelming problems of employment, relief, shelter, medical care, and education which plagued them all. Thus these levels of government, as well as the voters which supported them, began to look to the federal government for leadership, programs, and financial assistance.[2] As was noted earlier, some municipalities and states found that educational expenditures were particularly vulnerable to attack.[3] Schools lacked the powerful and vocal constituencies which could prevent disproportionate slashes in their appropriations. But even if educational budgets had declined only in the same degree as other governmental spending, the problems of schools and colleges would have been exceedingly serious.

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[1] The chapter title is that of Betty and Ernest K. Lindley's book on the National Youth Administration, A New Deal for Youth (New York: Viking Press, 1938).

[2] David A. Shannon, in Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 153 ff. describes some of the pressures upon the government.

[3] Cf. above, chapter 12.

In such a situation it was natural that educators should look to the federal government to deal with some of the more critical educational problems of the decade. And it was even more natural that politically liberal journalists should throw their weight behind federal programs aimed at alleviating particular educational difficulties. Unlike many more conservative Americans, the liberals who spoke through the Nation and the New Republic had no reluctance to call on the national government to meet pressing social and educational needs. Since 1918, when Villard had taken over direction of the Nation, that journal had propounded a new collective liberalism which supported governmental measures for human purposes. And the New Republic had been since its founding in 1914 a vigorous proponent of greater federal involvement in the economy and in social reform. Indeed, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the most respected historian of the New Deal, has identified Croly, the New Republic's original editor, and Dewey, a long-time contributing editor, as two of the four intellectuals who helped develop the philosophy on which the New Deal was based.[4]

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[4] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "Sources of the New Deal," in Schlesinger and Morton White, eds., Paths of American Thought (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 377-81. The other two were Charles A. Beard and Thorstein Veblen, both close associates of Croly and Dewey. These four, with Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and James Harvey Robinson, were also the leaders in the "Revolt Against Formalism" described by Morton White in Social Thought in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957). Cf. also Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), ch. 17, "The Philosophy of Liberalism."

Thus the support which the liberal journals gave to federal action on the educational front (as in other areas) was more than an ad hoc response to the pressing problems described in the previous chapter; it was an outgrowth of a basic political philosophy which welcomed collective solutions to collective problems. This philosophy had found little widespread support during the 1920's; now it was seen as relevant - indeed, necessary - not only by liberal intellectuals but by many politicians and their constituents.

Harry Zeitlin has written of the 1930's: "There was a striking extension of the role of the Federal government in education during this period."[5] However, in this chapter we shall not attempt to survey the responses of the Nation and the New Republic to the whole range of federal programs. Instead we shall use as case studies the two agencies which worked most directly with American youth - the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration.

I

Franklin Roosevelt assumed the office of the president on March 4, 1933. Among the earliest pieces of legislation which he sent to Congress was a bill for the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The revised bill, which became law on March 31, provided for the establishment of conservation camps for unemployed young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five.[6]

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[5] Zeitlin, p. 1.

Although the C.C.C. developed a rather extensive educational program, the major motivations behind its establishment were to provide work and income for unemployed youth and to undertake much-needed conservation projects. The problems of youth were acute by the winter of 1932-33. Many young men had left the inadequate security of their homes and were wandering aimlessly about the country seeking employment and excitement. They were seen not only as a problem to themselves but as a threat to the peace and order of the communities through which they passed. One of the objectives of the C.C.C., as a New Republic article put it, was to prevent such youth "from becoming semi-criminal hitchhikers."[7]

The C.C.C. was remarkably successful both in getting young men off the highways and out of the cities and in performing useful conservation work. During the summer of 1933, 300,000 youth were in the camps. Two years later this figure had risen to over half a million, and during the nine years of its existence over two and a half million young men went through the program. Roosevelt himself said, in an early assessment in 1934, that the C.C.C. had "probably been the most successful of anything we have done."[8]

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[6] Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), pp. 336-40.

[7] Jonathan Mitchell, "Roosevelt's Tree Army: I," New Republic, 83 (5/29/35), 64. Cf. John Kazarian, "The Starvation Army," Nation, 136 (4/12/33), 396-8 for a thorough description of life on the road, written by one of the wandering youth. Cf. also The Great Depression, David A. Shannon, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), Part IV, "Nomads of the Depression."

Because it dealt effectively and imaginatively with a serious depression problem, the C.C.C. was one of the most popular of all New Deal programs. And, as one might expect, the liberal journals greeted it with enthusiasm. Four days after the passage of the bill, the New Republic criticized those pacifists, deflationists, unionists, and Communists who - from their divergent positions - attacked the plan. The editors saw it as a very hopeful kind of program, and complained only that it was too modest an effort which would assist fewer than two percent of those out of work.[9] The Nation, too, approved of the C.C.C. program, and near the end of Roosevelt's first year in office singled it out as one of the best of the new government agencies, praising it especially for its effective work in soil and forest conservation. In 1935, Raymond Gram Swing, one of the journal's board of three editors, praised the C.C.C. as "the bright jewel of the New Deal" and declared that "on the whole the C.C.C. is liked throughout the breadth of the land, and deservedly so." And in 1937, when Roosevelt asked

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[8] Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal, 339.

[9] Editorial, "The Peacetime Army," New Republic, 74 (4/5/33), 202. This issue had probably gone to press before the actual passage of the bill.

Congress to make the agency permanent, the Nation called the C.C.C. "indubitably one of the best relief agencies set up under the New Deal."[10]

The original plans for the C.C.C. made no provision for educational work with the enrollees. In fact, the War Department, which supervised the entire operation, and Robert Fechner, director of the corps, at first resisted the effort to establish an educational program in the camps. But during 1933-34 George Zook, U. S. Commissioner of Education, worked out an educational plan which was carried out by the United States Office of Education under the aegis of the War Department.

Dr. C. S. Marsh was educational director of the agency from December 1933 through early 1934, when he left following a conflict with Fechner. But the programs which he instituted were continued and expanded under his successor, Howard W. Oxley. The educational work carried out under these two men was quite diverse, ranging from basic literacy classes through a variety of forms of vocational training, up to instruction in more traditional liberal and cultural subjects.

During the first four years participation in Corps educational programs was voluntary, and attendance at classes varied considerably in different camps and courses and with different instructors. But in 1937 the educational program was made compulsory, and the largest enrollments were recorded during the next two years.

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[10] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 137 (11/22/33), 581; Raymond Gram Swing, "Take the Army Out of the CCC," Nation, 141 (10/23/35), 459; Nation, 144 (5/15/37), 551.

Given the speed with which the C.C.C. was established and the ambiguity within the agency over the educational program, it is not surprising that certain problems arose. As was mentioned earlier, there was bureaucratic in-fighting which inhibited the effectiveness of the program. There was a conflict over goals, with men like Commissioner of Education Studebaker (who succeeded Zook in 1934) proposing a broader, [illegible] reformist program than was being offered in most camps. There was the question of the relationship of C.C.C. schools to local and state educational agencies.[11] And there was the problem of developing and maintaining free inquiry in Corps classes.

As with most matters, the Nation and the New Republic did not respond to these problems in a balanced way. They ignored for the most part questions such as Corps relationships with existing educational authorities, and concentrated on matters of particular concern to liberals - education for conservation, reformist elements in the instruction, military influence in the Corps and its classes, and intellectual freedom in the program.

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[11] Material in the above four paragraphs is based on Zeitlin, chapter III.

II

One of the primary functions of the C.C.C. was to carry out some badly-needed conservation projects. But the journalists were quick to note that such projects not only solved some pressing resource problems, but that they had a useful byproduct in conservation education both for the public and for the Corpsmen themselves. The Nation, in assessing the work of the organization in late 1933, declared that its "educational effect upon the farmer" - in demonstrating methods of controlling cycles of flood and drought - was "not its least important one."[12] (The editors hoped that this might encourage farmers also to believe that economic cycles might be regulated as well.)

Raymond Swing was impressed also with the prospect that work in the Corps might make American youth more concerned over the protection of American resources. He held to the hope that "if 200,000 young men pass through the camps every two years, in ten years a million young men would be educated conservationists, and in a few decades we should have a nation which for the first time was conservation-wise. That would mean that the American people at last had grown out of the piratical economy by which they spread over the continent." In teaching the younger generation about conservation the camps could become "the finest practical university of elemental social economy ever established in this country." It is clear from Swing's article that he was more impressed by the general educative effects of the whole C.C.C. program on its enrollees - particularly in this area of conservation - than he was by the specifically "educational" efforts of the agency. In fact he declared that "in a permanent CCC the present somewhat extemporized system of education will need overhauling."[13]

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[12] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 137 (11/22/33), 581.

Jonathan Mitchell, a contributing editor of the New Republic, studied with some thoroughness the work of the C.C.C., and reported his findings to journal readers in two articles entitled "Roosevelt's Tree Army." He agreed with those who held that the organization had succeeded in its employment and conservation objectives, but that its educational work had been only a partial success. The instructional program had been handicapped by the running dispute between Fechner and Marsh.[14]

March was the kind of educator for whose ideas New Republic readers would naturally have some sympathy. According to Mitchell he had tried through the C.C.C. educational programs to "give a large part of the male youth of this country a conscious, realistic social point of view." His reformist outlook was evident in a "Handbook for Educational Advisers" in which he stated the goal of C.C.C. instructional activities: "To develop as far as practicable an understanding of the prevailing social and economic conditions, to the end that each man may cooperate intelligently in improving these conditions." He arranged for the production of inexpensive socially-oriented textbooks for camp use, but these were suppressed by Fechner. In spite of bureaucratic apathy and hostility, however, Marsh succeeded in improving camp libraries and in hiring some outstanding educational supervisors for the camps.

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[13] Swing, Nation, v. 141, p. 460.

[14] Mitchell, New Republic, v. 83, p. 64.

Mitchell saw two immediate imperatives for the Corps: "better central organization, and an ending of the enmity between Fechner's office and the educational division." This latter need could be met simply by giving the new educational director increased authority. Mitchell proposed also that educational work be given a higher priority in the agency, for under existing arrangements all studying was done in the evening after a full day's work. In effect, the C.C.C. was saying that the development of America's natural resources took precedence over the growth of its human intellectual resources. Mitchell proposed that time during the day be made available for education as well as for work.[15] Unfortunately, however, little was done to give a more educative orientation to the work of the C.C.C., and as late as 1941,

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[15] Mitchell, "Roosevelt's Tree Army: II," New Republic, 83 (6/12/35), 127-29.

Dorothy Bromley reported in the New Republic that in the camps "formal evening classes for youth employed all day in strenuous physical work have made little appeal."[16]

Of more continuing concern to the journals, however, was the problem, which Mitchell had alluded to, of intellectual freedom in the camps. In 1936 the New Republic reprinted from The Social Studies some advice carried in a handbook for C.C.C. instructors. The manual recommended various devices by which teachers could steer discussion groups away from "dangerous issues." One such approach was "to promise to bring up the dangerous issue at some future time. This will make it possible for the instructor to secure additional information before discussing it, and it also sets up the possibility of the topic being forgotten. A story to switch the interests of the class is a clever device for changing the topic."

Such schemes were too attractive to leave alone, so "in a spirit of sweet cooperation" the editors added some further suggestions. Among them:

> If a C.C.C. class asks, "How does it happen that so many people are hungry while surplus food is being destroyed?" let the instructor be prepared and immediately tell, not merely a story, but a dirty one. This will take the boys' minds off the subject, and the story probably won't be any dirtier than a true answer to the question would be.[17]

But such light treatment should not obscure the depth of the liberal conviction on freedom of thought in the camps. Both journals carried letters from subscribers who objected to the C.C.C.'s connection with the Army, which carried with it the "evils of regimentation."[18] And the *Nation* proposed editorially that the agency's connection with the War Department be severed, offering as partial justification for the move the fact that the Army had "deliberately sought to censor the reading matter sent to the camps."[19]

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[16] Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, "They're in the Army Now," New Republic, 104 (1/6/41), 14.

[17] Editorial, "Sedition in the C.C.C.," New Republic, 86 (2/12/36), 7-8.

Such defenses of free inquiry in the C.C.C. were, of course, extensions of the journals' general positions in favor of academic freedom. If freedom in the pursuit of truth was sound policy in higher education, it was equally necessary in other educational endeavors. And the journals were doubly vigilant when the attacks on free inquiry came - as they often did in the C.C.C. - from conservatives and militarists, the natural enemies of the liberals of the 1930's.

In the case of the C.C.C., as in so many areas, one can see the journals performing both their supportive and their critical functions. They praised the new agency as a hopeful, if inadequate, approach to pressing social and economic problems. They expressed special enthusiasm for the educational benefits offered by the agency - both to farmers and others not enrolled in the program and to the young members of the Corps. They were encouraged by the reformist cast which some agency personnel tried to give to the educational program. But they did not let their enthusiasm blind them to the dangers in the program, and they proposed structural and personnel changes which would weaken those elements of thought control and militarism which threatened a truly progressive educational program in the Corps.

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[18] Bernard Harkness, letter to editor, *Nation*, 146 (2/5/38), 168; Wayne McMillen, letter to editor, *New Republic*, 74 (3/15/33), 132.

[19] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 144 (5/15/37), 551. *The Social Frontier*, a radical educational journal, founded in 1934, shared the concern of the older journals over possible militarism and restrictions on thought in the C.C.C. See George A. Coe, "What Sort of School is a CCC Camp?" *Social Frontier*, 1 (May, 1935), 24-6; and Norman Woelfel, "Banned from C.C.C. Camps," (Review of *You and Machines*, by William F. Ogburn), *Social Frontier*, 1 (February, 1935), 39.

III

The Civilian Conservation Corps was remarkably effective in coping with the problems of those unemployed youth who were willing and able to enter the agency's camps. But Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, and various government leaders were concerned also about the difficulties of other young people - primarily students - for whom the C.C.C. was not appropriate. It was important that as many as possible of these youth remain in school - in the long run for the benefits which their education would confer on them and on society, and in the short run, to keep them from competing with adults for scarce jobs.

After 1932 hard-pressed students began dropping out of college in increasing numbers. As enrollments declined, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, in February, 1934, began extending financial aid to college students in hopes that many might be able to continue their studies.[20] This was simply a stop-gap effort, however, and on June 26, 1935, Roosevelt created the National Youth Administration to conduct the program on a more permanent basis. The new agency gave work relief to high school, college, and graduate students, as well as to some out-of-school youth. It undertook a variety of projects, including vocational training and guidance, youth centers, and work for libraries and other municipal agencies. By April, 1937, the N.Y.A. was assisting 630,000 youth, even more than the C.C.C. Seven-eighths of these young people were in school, and the rest were employed on a variety of projects.[21]

The educational work of the National Youth Administration differed from that of the C.C.C. in at least two major ways: first, education had a higher priority in the N.Y.A. program, and one of its great effects was to keep youngsters in school; second, it accomplished its purposes largely by enabling youth to continue their studies in established educational institutions. So, although it had a greater impact on education than the C.C.C., it carried out few directly educational projects of its own.

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[20] Dixon Wecter, *The Age of the Great Depression*, 188. For comprehensive data on college enrollments through 1935, cf. Willey, ed. *Depression*, Ch. 11, "Enrolments."

[21] Wecter, *Age of the Great Depression*, 187-8. For a thorough examination of the work of the N.Y.A. up to 1938, cf. Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, *A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration* (New York: Viking, 1938). Searle F. Charles deals briefly with the N.Y.A. in the context of the whole relief effort in *Minister of Relief: Harry Hopkins and the Depression* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), 152-4.

But like the C.C.C., the N.Y.A. was plagued with a number of persistent problems. Aubrey Williams, the director, was often under attack as too radical. Some of the employment projects, both for in-school and out-of-school youth, were poorly planned and supervised, and a number seemed to be little more than busy work. The Office of Education and the National Education Association were resentful of the fact that the N.Y.A. sometimes by-passed them in setting up its projects. Vocational training programs under the N.Y.A. were sometimes misused by unscrupulous employers.[22]

As in the case of the C.C.C., the liberal journals responded selectively to the agency and its problems. Their analyses of the new program tended to de-emphasize administrative and bureaucratic difficulties and to concentrate on the general inadequacy of the N.Y.A., on its failure to respond realistically to the serious nature of the "youth problem," and on the opportunities it presented to certain industries to "use" N.Y.A. youth as cheap labor.

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[22] Zeitlin, pp. 201-214.

When the N.Y.A. was first launched, the Nation and the New Republic were prompt to applaud the promise held out by the new organization. Two weeks after Roosevelt established the agency, both journals carried editorials favorable to the new organization. The Nation declared that "the plight of young people is perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the present crisis" and defended the effort on a variant of the "safety-valve theory": "If democracy does not enlist youth, fascism will." And the New Republic praised Roosevelt and Hopkins for dealing forthrightly with the "staggering economic and psychological problems facing young men and women in the depression . . ."[23]

During the succeeding eight years of the National Youth Administration's existence, the New Republic, at least, continued to hope for fulfillment of the promise which the agency seemed at first to offer. In this it was not entirely disappointed. After the organization had been in operation for seven months, Jonathan Mitchell reported that the N.Y.A. was assisting over 100,000 undergraduates, many graduate students, and nearly 200,000 high school pupils to continue their studies. Over 90,000 out-of-school youth were being helped through jobs in government, in research, and on recreation projects.[24]

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[23] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 141 (7/10/35), 30; editorial paragraph, New Republic, 83 (7/10/35), 234. Cf. also the Nation editorial, "Our Noble Educators," which appeared a week later, and which applauded the government decision to spend N.Y.A. funds through the F.E.R.A. instead of the National Education Association. V. 141, pp. 61-2.

In May, 1936, "T.R.B." referred in the New Republic to "the relative success of Mr. Aubrey Williams' National Youth Administration." He noted that nearly all of the youth in the out-of-school work program were receiving instruction in conjunction with their work, and that N.Y.A. personnel considered that the effort constituted, "at least potentially, a wholly new kind of popular university." Some of the more effective work-study programs could be considered as "education at its best."[25]

John Chamberlain, in reviewing the Lindley's book, "A New Deal for Youth," two years later, concluded that the N.Y.A. had a "record of relief money that has been well invested." He made the surprising claim that it had "done more to create a feeling of self-reliance in young Americans than anything since the Alger books." In spite of its inadequacies both in assistance to individuals and in total numbers aided, "For a few hundred thousand destitute boys and girls, the N.Y.A. has meant work, self-respect, and the opportunity to continue their education on at least a part-time basis."[26]

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[24] Jonathan Mitchell, "Without Work Experience," New Republic, 85 (1/22/36), 307.

[25] T.R.B., "Washington Notes," New Republic, 86 (5/6/36), 366-7.

[26] John Chamberlain, "Self-Help and Government Aid," New Republic, 95 (7/27/38), 338. For a rather neutral summary of the work of the N.Y.A. cf. "Balance Sheet of the New Deal," (Special Supplement), New Republic, 86 (6/10/36), 153.

In 1941, when the nation was shifting its attention from depression to defense, the New Republic again found reason to commend the N.Y.A. In an editorial proposing greater reliance on the agency in vocational training for defense projects, the editors stated that "the National Youth Administration has the organization, the experience, the social intelligence and some of the equipment" to do the job. Its practical training programs had operated on the principles of "learning by doing in the better sense." But though the agency could assist in the defense program, the editors insisted that the "non-defense activities of the N.Y.A. should not be crippled. The people on these projects are from low-income homes. Many of them vitally need the opportunity, the encouragement, the discipline, and the few dollars a month that the NYA provides . . . ."[27]

Such statements, however, appear to have exhausted the optimism of the liberal journals on the N.Y.A. The agency never evoked from the editors and writers (nor from the nation at large)[28] the enthusiasm engendered by the C.C.C. Part of the explanation may lie on the fact that the C.C.C., with its visible conservation projects, its camp life, and its forest rangers, had a romantic appeal which the N.Y.A. could not match. It was easy to identify with the C.C.C.

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[27] Editorial, "Training for Defense," New Republic, 104 (4/21/41), 520.

[28] Wecter, Age of the Great Depression, 188.

as the modern expression of William James' "moral equivalent of war"; it was more difficult to evoke the same response to the N.Y.A.'s less dramatic programs. The N.Y.A., for the most part, enabled youth to continue a fairly normal pattern of life and education. Keeping youngsters in school or in part-time jobs while living at home lacked the elements of adventure which in the C.C.C. managed to stir the country's imaginative impulses.

For whatever reason, the liberal weeklies soon became fairly critical of the inadequate way in which government youth programs, including the N.Y.A., were being carried out. Nine months after the agency was set up, the Nation lamented the hopeless chances of the Amlie-Benson Youth Bill, which would have set up a really substantial,well-financed program for the youth of the nation. Such bold approaches were badly needed, and yet Commissioner of Education Studebaker was proposing only additional study of the problems of the young. The editors insisted that study was not the major need:

> Meanwhile ever more transients are riding our freight cars and new criminals are being made every day. Most important of all, an unemployed mass of young people form fertile soil for social despair and for all the reckless political movements that may lead to fascism. The Roosevelt Administration is making one of its most disastrous errors by failing to grapple with the problem of the desperate American youth.[29]

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[29] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 142 (4/1/36), 399.

William P. Mangold, who wrote for the New Republic a regular column called "On the Labor Front," questioned not only the adequacy of the N.Y.A. but whether its programs in vocational guidance and training were even a sound approach to the difficulties facing youth. Admitting that enrollment in such N.Y.A. programs might be "better than idleness," he nevertheless declared that there was little value in educating people for jobs which did not exist. The problem was basically one of employment rather than education, and "unless the government can also find real jobs the National Youth Administration will not help greatly in solving the fundamental problem."[30]

But as in the case of the C.C.C., it was left to contributing editor Jonathan Mitchell to write the most comprehensive analysis of the various problems besetting the N.Y.A. and its educational efforts. Although the agency had been in operation only six months when he wrote "Without Work Experience" for the New Republic, enough time had elapsed so that Mitchell was able to identify some of those aspects of the program about which liberals would have doubts. The agency had been "inordinately slow in putting its limited program into operation." Like the C.C.C. it suffered from an administrative feud - this one between Harry Hopkins, director of the Works

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[30] William P. Mangold, "On the Labor Front," New Republic, 83 (7/17/35), 279. The issue of the priority of jobs or training is a persistent one, still being hotly debated in the context of the "war on poverty."

Progress Administration, and Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior.[31] This super-feud was paralleled at a lower level by a "contest for jurisdiction" between N.Y.A. director Aubrey Williams (an assistant to Hopkins), and Commissioner of Education John Studebaker (who worked under Ickes).

Laboring under such handicaps, suffering from the "meagerness of its payments to individuals," and not reaching "more than a tenth of those needing help," perhaps not too much should have been expected from the new organization. But Mitchell nonetheless proceeded to indict the N.Y.A. for "doing nothing to hasten a final solution of the youth problem." Its sins in this respect were largely ones of omission. First, although the effect of such programs as the N.Y.A. was to hold youth in school until they were older, no effort was being made to face "the immense problem of changed curricula that will be made necessary by an increase in the school age, nor is it encouraging teachers to draft solutions of their own." Second, although vocational training programs involved both "misuse of government funds and exploitation of apprentice labor," the N.Y.A. was providing no leadership in developing projects free of such ills nor in giving direction to vocational education in general. And finally, while the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the N.Y.A. deliberately chose not to antagonize voting adults by letting the young compete for their jobs, it might be socially preferable that "young men and women, upon reaching adulthood, have first chance at jobs and marriage, even if they displace workers in middle age."

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[31] For the larger dimensions of this feud see Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper, 1955), 78-9.

Perhaps upon reflection Mitchell saw that the N.Y.A. was too new and too small a program to bear the weight of this broad-gauge social and educational indictment. The problems of youth "without work experience" had their roots deep in the total economic and social structure, and were beyond the competence of one new bureau to deal with. But that made the crisis no less pressing. Mitchell admitted in closing that perhaps the N.Y.A. was not equipped to concern itself with the fundamental questions he had raised, but concluded that "if this is so then some other agency - either inside or outside the government - is urgently needed."[32]

Clearly, in putting forth criticisms such as these, Mitchell was transcending the context of one government youth program. He was, in effect, using the N.Y.A. as a "launching pad" for fundamental critiques of the way in which America inducted the young into adulthood. In a constricted economy society was offering to youth bribes (albeit meager ones) to remain in school. Yet it was doing little to see that schools developed programs more suited to the present or future needs and interests of youth than those which had been inherited from an earlier era. In an unjust and contracted economy, government vocational training programs, poorly financed and supervised, gave unprincipled employers further opportunities to exploit defenseless youth. And in a society with too few opportunities to go around, it insured that those in power, put there by adult voters, could arrange society so that competition from the young would be effectively walled off.

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[32] Mitchell, New Republic, v. 85, pp. 306-8.

Liberal journalists like Mitchell had the insight to see such problems with some clarity. But perhaps only someone with the startling cross-cultural perspective of the anthropologist could perceive what was really at work here - the creation of a new minority group: youth. In 1941 anthropologist Ruth Benedict undertook the analysis of this phenomenon for New Republic readers. She pointed out the inaccuracy of the adult charge that youth had abandoned the values of their elders. On the contrary, they had learned those values all too well: "We taught them our own standard of success: it lay in the material world and money was the measure of it." But having built these values into character structures of the young, society then proceeded to let the economy smash up, thereby creating a world in which youth could not hope to realize these values.

Miss Benedict was describing a situation in which ideas and beliefs were out of congruence with reality. The economic and employment situation had changed drastically and terribly, yet the young continued to carry around in their minds old ideas of independence and personal autonomy. In a depressed job market the young had difficulty exercising their independence - "of marrying and having children, of choosing which house they'd live in." Many youth relied on their families for support, and felt deeply guilty for doing so. Government youth programs presented the same psychological burdens: "The CCC and the NYA are as confusing therefore as being dependent on one's father for ten years after school is over."

In such a situation one could not blame the young for organizing and protesting. They were thus demonstrating politically the initiative which it was fruitless to express economically. "Youth has felt humiliated by unemployment and its way of lessening this humiliation is by youth organizations which devote themselves principally to the grinding of teeth." The young were becoming, in fact - as women had once been, and as Negroes still were - a minority group. They were receiving "special treatment, special disabilities," and then - through the very efficiency of patterns of value-inculcation - made to feel guilty about its plight in a social world it had not created. But it was still in the power of adults to rectify the situation - to restore the congruence of inner values and outer realities:

> The elder generation should say, "There but for the grace of God go I," and learn from them how it would have behaved if it had been bred to the extra-materialistic dream of the twenties and then cut loose without a sou to earn. Such attitudes would go far toward closing the breach

> between youth and its elders and we should not be so apt to scold. Our attention would be concentrated instead on providing the conditions under which our favorite American virtues can operate without individual and social tragedy. If we are in earnest about preserving our American virtues, we will count no price too high.[33]

IV

Through the *Nation*'s and the *New Republic*'s reactions to the needs of youth in the depression and to the federal government's response to those needs, one gains further insight into the liberal journalists' general stance on educational matters. The editors and writers deplored the economic and social mismanagement which had weakened already inadequate educational opportunities; they supported programs such as the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A. which sought to restore or extend some of these opportunities; they argued in favor of a greater educational orientation in programs like the C.C.C.

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[33] Ruth Benedict, "Our Last Minority: Youth," *New Republic* 104 (2/24/41), 271-2. Contemporary commentators have also pointed to the phenomenon of youth who have learned too well for adult comfort the values which society claims to hold. Michael Harrington has written of the "New Left": "An incredibly American generation in our midst has become radical by taking the house platitudes seriously." The Mystical Militants," *New Republic*, 154 (2/19/66), 22. And Edgar Friedenberg maintains that "the values affirmed by the [student] protesters, including their right to dissent, are far more deeply rooted in our culture than the policies against which they are directed . . ." "A Polite Encounter Between the Generations," *New York Times Magazine*, (1/16/66), 73.

But throughout their commentary the two liberal weeklies never failed to fulfill their functions as critical journals of opinion. Thus they pointed out the quantitative inadequacies of the new programs as well as their internal, administrative deficiencies. Perhaps even more fundamental, however, was the demonstration by the journals that government youth programs were not merely attempted solutions for temporary ills; they were symptoms of underlying social, economic and educational failures. In their commentary on the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A. the journals, particularly the New Republic, put forth again the position which had characterized them since the days of Randolph Bourne's articles on education: America was to a considerable extent a social failure; it offered unsatisfying life styles to most adults, and to the young it held out clumsy and inexpedient means of growing into even those thin patterns of life. In the 1930's, while federal programs in relief and education offered small steps toward the solution of these difficulties, they provided even more powerfully a way of making the problems of youth visible and understandable on a nationwide scale.

Chapter Fourteen: The Educator and the Depression[1]

The Great Depression, which was so destructive to the progress of students, schools, and colleges, could not fail to have a profound impact on the teachers and professors who staffed America's educational institutions. One can describe this impact in directional terms: it pushed educators downwards in security, income, and sometimes even in economic class; it also inclined many of them leftwards in politics. These economic, social, and political effects were apparent during the 1930's at all levels of education - elementary, secondary, and college - and the liberal journals gave them a great deal of attention.[2]

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[1] The chapter title is that of an article in the *Nation*, 137 (8/23/33), 213.

[2] Generalizations implying a simple stimulus-response relationship between economic conditions and political movements, must, of course, be continually questioned and qualified. Schlesinger, for example, holds that some form of New Deal would have come about in the 1930's even without the pressure of the Depression. Cf. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Sources of the New Deal," in *Paths of American Thought*, edited by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Morton White (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 372-77.

The drift of many educators towards the political left, towards activism, and towards unionism, while basically a direct product of the economic depression, was accentuated by a new "Red Scare" - by a wave of teachers oaths and other attacks on the already limited academic freedoms held by educators. This new wave of repression was no doubt itself partially a product of the tensions and anxieties of the depression years. But the significant fact is that both economic and political pressures were forcing a new response from American educators.

In all this educators did not become the passive, acceptant victims of outside influences. They were acted upon, and they reacted. If economic pressures or conservative political coercion were forces over which they had little control, their movement towards the left was at least in part a voluntary one. (They might, for example, like the followers of Father Coughlin, have become quasi-fascist.)[3] And in their leftward shift, as one might expect, educators had the support as well as the criticism of the Nation and the New Republic.

In this chapter, the problems of educators during the Depression, as perceived by the liberal journals, will be analyzed. First to be considered will be the economic and political pressures acting on instructional staffs. Then the various forms of teacher response will be explored: standard political action, support for federal remedial legislation, and the move toward organization. In regard to teacher organizations it will be important to analyze the journals' shift from general support for teacher unions to a class-conscious sympathy for militant and Communist-dominated groups, and finally - at the end of the decade - to a break with, and vigorous opposition to, the Communist unions. Then in the chapter which follows, we shall consider briefly the relationship of this whole development to the shifts in educational ideology which were being led at this time by George Counts and some of his colleagues. Such an exploration will permit further definition of the educational outlook of the liberal journalists during the "depression decade."[4]

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[3] For the fascist elements in Coughlin's movement, cf. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Politics of Upheaval (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 25-8.

I

Articles, editorials and letters all dramatized for journal readers the particular predicament of elementary and secondary teachers throughout the country during these lean years. A New Republic editorial reported in May, 1933, that, according to the High School Teachers' Association, there were 15,000 eligible teachers seeking positions in New York City alone. And those who had jobs were not much better off than the unemployed, as a quarter of a million teachers were scheduled to receive the following year salaries below the meager minimum set by the National Recovery Administration for unskilled manufacturing workers. Eunice Langdon reported that conditions in poorer parts of the nation were even worse, with Alabama, for example, owing its teachers $7,000,000 by 1933. In Michigan, while high school enrollment was increasing by seven per cent, teaching staffs had been cut by three percent and salaries by ten to forty per cent.[5]

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[4] This phrase is the title of Broadus Mitchell's economic history of the 1930's (New York: Rinehart & Winston, 1947).

But there was a more personal, human story behind such statistics. Miss Langdon reported the case of a sick and crippled Chicago teacher who, in desperation over his situation, killed himself: "His widow, left with three children, stated that he had not been paid for eight months, that his property had depreciated, groceries which his family needed could be bought only on wage assignment, and worry had aggravated his illness." When Chicago teachers finally were paid three-fourths of a year's salary, one reported his sense of relief: "For the first time in four painful years my mailbox will cease to be cluttered; I'll not be afraid to answer my doorbell any more; the hard-boiled collectors that have hunted me relentlessly will at last be appeased."[6]

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[5] Editorial, "From Campus to Breadline," *New Republic*, 75 (5/17/33), 7; John K. Norton, "Educational Finance," *Nation*, 139 (12/5/34); Eunice Langdon, "The Teacher Faces the Depression," *Nation*, 137 (8/16/33), 182-3. Norton was Professor of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University.

[6] Langdon, *Nation*, v.137, p. 82; Edith Smith (pseud.), "Chicago Teachers Are Paid," *Nation*, 139 (9/19/34), 322.

Equally poignant were the letters received by the journals from individual teachers and representatives of teacher organizations. The Unemployed Teachers' Association of New York City wrote to both weeklies concerning the plight of its members. By 1932 the ten thousand unemployed teachers of the city could "no longer withdraw into a false haven of pride and gentility; their need is too desperate and pressing." The city school board was combining classes and increasing class size, a move which would "not only create more difficult tasks for the teachers employed," but also lower the quality of education for the children.[7]

But perhaps the letter which most touched the editors' (or at least the circulation managers') hearts, was one received by the Nation in 1937 from an Arizona teacher who praised the Nation, reporting: "I get more good from it than from any other paper with which I have ever come in contact," and informed the editors that he had borrowed on his life insurance in order to subscribe to the journal for two years. He explained that his financial hardship was due to the fact that his county had not paid school warrants for over a year, and closed by asking the editors: "Do you know of some person who might buy my school warrants now or next year?"[8]

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[7] "Saving on the Schools" (letter from Unemployed Teachers' Association), New Republic, 71 (5/25/32), 49; "False Economy" (letter from U.T.A.), Nation, 135 (9/28/32), 284.

[8] Ellsworth Schnebly, "Teaching on Promises" (letter to editors), Nation, 137 (7/26/33), 105.

But the problems of public school teachers were not unique, and the liberal weeklies gave similar coverage to the difficulties of college faculties. William Thomas reported in the *Nation* that by the summer of 1933 "wholesale dismissals" of instructors had occurred at Ohio State, the University of Michigan, and other institutions. The University of Pittsburgh had dropped more than one-eighth of its faculty, and Cornell had released forty-four staff members in one year. For the lucky ones who had managed to retain their positions, salary cuts ranging up to forty-five per cent had been instituted. The following year Villard stated that some faculty members at the University of Oregon had been forced to accept salary cuts of over fifty per cent.[9]

Of particular concern was the fact that "equality of sacrifice" was not the pattern adopted by most colleges. Institutions found it easiest to proceed on the "last hired, first fired" system, so instructors and others at the lowest academic ranks were those most likely to be let go. And even when pay cuts rather than dismissals were adopted, some universities reduced instructor's meager salaries by a larger percentage than those of professors. Thus "in nearly every case the people most severely affected by the retrenchment are those least able to stand it."[10]

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[9] William B. Thomas, "The Educator and the Depression: II - The College Instructor," *Nation*, 137 (8/23/33), 213-14; Villard, "The Plight of Higher Education," *Nation*, 138 (3/28/34), 349.

[10] Thomas, *Nation*, v. 137, pp. 214-15. Thomas utilized some material gathered by Committee Z of the A.A.U.P., whose report, edited by Malcolm Willey, is cited above. Apparently the University of Chicago avoided the regressive retrenchment policy followed by many colleges. Cf. letter by Paul H. Douglas (now

As was the case with teachers, spokesmen for college instructors used the correspondence pages of the journals to remind liberals of their predicament. A.C.C. Hill, Jr. wrote to the New Republic in 1932 to announce the founding of a "temporary depression college" which would bring together students with little money and instructors without positions. Even though the faculty was to receive only room and board, twenty experienced instructors had already applied for jobs at the new college.[11] But schemes such as this had little impact on the critical employment situation for college faculties. Robert Conklin pointed out in 1936 that the American Association of University Professors' blacklisting of the University of Pittsburgh could have little effect on that institution's ability to attract a faculty, because "dollars are scarcer than teachers." There were many "trained and experienced college teachers either totally unemployed or teaching in Relief Administration projects for $21 a week . . . ." The colleges held all the cards in such a situation and A.A.U.P. pressure could hardly hope to impress the university. Conklin expected "Pittsburgh to close down about the same year that the Standard Oil goes bankrupt and the Communists elect a president."[12]

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[11] A.C.C. Hill, Jr., "A Depression College," (letter to editors), New Republic, 72 (10/19/32), 264.

[12] Robert J. Conklin, "A Job for Students," (letter to editors), New Republic, 85 (1/29/36), 340.

II

There can be little doubt that these various economic pressures - joblessness, delayed salaries, pay cuts, and increased work loads - alone would have been enough to impel many educators to seek more active organizational means of defending their interests. But when such economic hardships were combined with political attacks on academic freedom and on teacher loyalty, the move to organize and protest took on added momentum. This was particularly true when, as during the 1930's, educators could identify the same conservative forces as responsible for both situations.

Cause and effect in this matter are difficult to sort out. It may be that conservative attacks on academic freedom in the 1930's were brought on by the first glimmerings of liberalism and activism among teachers responding to their economic plight. Or possibly conservatives defeated at the polls sought to build a bastion of traditionalism and conformity in schools and colleges. Whatever the origin of the movement, there clearly was a resurgence during the 1930's of attempts to impose orthodoxy on American teachers and professors.[13] These attacks on educators took a number of forms: the enactment of teacher oaths, the firing of "radical" instructors, loyalty investigations, restrictions of union activity, and attacks on liberal textbooks.

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[13] Edgar W. Knight, Fifty Years of American Education (New York: Ronald Press, 1952, 173.

As they had since 1914, the liberal journals explored and deplored such trends, particularly teachers' loyalty oaths, which were perhaps the most visible and measurable symbol of the new wave of repression. In 1935 the Nation reported the findings of the American Civil Liberties Union that the number of states imposing such oaths had grown in four years from six to twenty, and that behind the measures were the Hearst press, the Daughters of the American Revolution, veterans groups, lodges, and business associations.[14] The journal had earlier noted, fairly enough, that the civil liberties record of the federal government under Roosevelt was good. It was in the states, particularly the legislatures, that loyalty oaths and other oppressive measures were being promoted.[15]

The liberal weeklies gave particular attention to the fight against teacher oaths in such politically important states as Massachusetts. The New Republic was conscious of the irony in the new law which required instructors to swear allegiance to the constitution of Massachusetts - a document which guaranteed "the right of revolution - not once, but twice!" With tongue in cheek the editors added:

> When we realize that the infamous members of the Massachusetts State Legislature are actually forcing thousands of innocent young teachers,

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[14] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 141 (8/21/35), 198. The New Republic had carried, two months earlier, a summary of restrictive legislation, compiled for it by a staff member of the A.C.L.U.: "Where Civil Liberties Stand Today," New Republic, 83 (6/26/35), 187-190.

[15] Editorial paragraphs, Nation, 140 (2/20/35), 207.

> male and female, to swear loyalty to these subversive sentiments, we get so mad we see blue. Is the State Legislature subsidized by Moscow gold?[16]

The Nation, too, resisted - though more seriously - the teacher oath in Massachusetts and other states. It saw such oaths as exhibitions of "infantilism by our state legislatures," and regretted the decision of Harvard's Kirtley Mather and other liberals to drop their fight against the oath. While university faculties, relatively secure in their exercise of academic freedom, might find the oath "too ridiculous to be worth resisting," school teachers in small towns were much more vulnerable. College liberals should not drop their fight, for "since the teachers who have the most to fear from red-baiting organizations are in no position to combat the oath, the responsibility obviously falls on the few whose positions are most secure."[17]

But loyalty oaths were only part of the problem facing elementary and secondary school teachers. In 1934 the Nation alerted its readers to what it saw as the beginning of a "renewed campaign to force teachers in schools to hew the line of orthodoxy." The editors offered several items in support of this assertion: six Toledo teachers had been warned that they would lose their jobs "unless they recanted their radicalism (one had used a book by New Dealer Rexford Tugwell as a reference!); a principal had been dismissed in North Carolina for writing a novelistic expose of school conditions; and teachers' college presidents in California had supported the proposition that pledges of loyalty should be required not only of teachers but of students![18] A month later the editors announced that the New York City Board of Examiners was instituting procedures for screening out subversive teachers. The steps taken were so alarming to the editors that they denounced them with inflated rhetoric as a "virtual system of espionage."[19]

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[16] Editorial paragraph, New Republic, 86 (3/4/36), 95.

[17] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 141 (10/16/35), 422. Cf. also the editorial paragraph on the Massachusetts oath in the New Republic, 86 (3/25/36), 178-9.

Some of the pressures for conformity among teachers would not normally be described as violations of academic freedom, but they inspired the same responses from the liberal journals - a combination of irony and indignation. The existing surplus of teachers permitted school boards to use absurd criteria in hiring and firing; and many systems began to enforce old rules against married women teachers. The *Nation* reported that this had caused some to conceal their marriages or even to divorce their husbands - "with whom, however, they continue on amicable terms." The limit was reached, however, in the case of a woman who was refused a teaching license because she was thirty pounds overweight. This excess poundage supposedly made the teacher a poor insurance risk and was unaesthetic, as well. This case impelled the editors to look nostalgically back to the past:

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[18] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 139 (9/12/34), 282-3. The Communist *New Masses* carried an enthusiastic review of the novel referred to, *Just Plain Larnin'*, by James M. Shields. (v. 10, pp. 25-6). The reviewer, Oakley Johnson, thought Shields' novel showed the influence of George Counts' ideas.

[19] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 139 (10/17/34), 422; Cf. also 148 (4/29/39), 483.

> In the good old days teachers could be fat or thin, some of them were decidedly not 'esthetic,' and a few had perceptible mustaches. Obviously this was a slovenly way to appoint our teachers, and still more regulation may be in order. We suggest the following: All applicants for a teaching position must be blonde, slender, must dislike the company of males over fourteen, and must vote the Republican ticket regularly; they must not chew gum. This will put everything back on a high intellectual level, and we can sit back and feel that our children's future is in safe hands.[20]

Comments such as this were in the Menckian vein, intending through humor and exaggeration to point up the absurdity and insanity of irrelevant restrictions on teachers. More characteristic of the journals - and part of a long liberal tradition - were the recurrent defenses of academic freedom at the college level. The attacks on freedom in the colleges, came, according to the journals, from the same sources as those in the public schools: from militarists, patrioteers, businessmen, and the yellow press. A few samples of journal comment will serve to indicate the consistency of support for academic freedom and provide background for the journals' organizational prescriptions for the problem.

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[20] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 141 (7/31/35), 115. Cf. also Floyd Dell's attack on Bernard De Voto, for his defense of the "Vestal Virgin" theory of school staffing: "Bernard De Voto and Kitty Smith," Nation, 144 (1/23/37), 98-9.

In 1931, while Hoover still presided over America's slide into economic chaos, Norman Thomas wrote for the *Nation* a thorough case study of the problems of one fairly typical large state university. Thomas, at that time a contributing editor of the *Nation*, saw Ohio State as "a splendid laboratory for the study of what has been called the 'hire learning' in America . . . " The line-up in the case of Professor Herbert A. Miller was one journal readers were familiar with: on the side of the liberal angels was Miller, who had opposed compulsory military training, expressed liberal views on race relations, and indicated a sympathetic interest in Gandhi's fight for Indian freedom; on the other side was President of the Trustees Julius Stone, a leading Columbus industrialist, banker, and newspaper publisher.

According to Thomas, Stone and his allies ran the university as a "disguised economic dictatorship," which expected its students to be "docile Babbitts in embryo, its university president to be a high-grade office manager, and its faculty to conform or get out." Under such a regime the university could not rise above its usual level as "that annex to the stadium which we call the college campus in America."[21]

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[21] Norman Thomas, "'Hire Learning' at Ohio State," *Nation*, 132 (6/17/31), 654-6. On this same topic cf. the editorial paragraph which the *Nation* carried in the next issue: 132 (6/24/31), 667. An article by James Ridgeway in the February 5, 1966 *New Republic* ("Missionaries in Darkest Ohio," v. 154, pp. 9-10), indicates the persistence of such problems and also of liberal responses to them. Ridgeway indicts - among other forces - the same Wolfe business interests, banks, and newspapers, which were making trouble for university faculty members twenty-five years earlier.

Throughout the decade journal readers were treated to such vigorous defenses of beleaguered professors, to attacks on conservative trustees and administrators, and to praise for those faculties and students who manfully resisted the pressures toward orthodoxy. George Counts was lauded in the Nation in 1935 for his exposure of the latest phase of "Hearst's perennial red-hunt."[22] In 1935 the New Republic denounced Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for its dismissal of Granville Hicks, who - while an admitted Communist sympathizer - was "one of the shining successes of the English department." Events such as these were evidence that "the whole situation regarding civil liberties in the academic world daily grows more tense."[23] The New Republic was similarly indignant at the failure of City College to reappoint Morris Schappes to the faculty. Schappes was, according to the editors, an outstanding teacher and writer, but he was also a founder of the City College Teachers Union and he had addressed a rally of student peace strikers, and was thus an embarrassment to the college administration.[24]

Even President Conant of Harvard, a relative liberal among college executives, came under fire from the New Republic for his failure to grant tenure to Dr.'s Walsh and Sweezy of the

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[22] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 140 (1/9/35), 30-31.

[23] Editorial paragraph, New Republic, 83 (6/12/35), 115.

[24] Editorial paragraph, New Republic, 87 (5/20/36), 31. President Robinson of City College was a frequent target of liberal barbs. Cf., for example, the editorial paragraph in the Nation, 142 (2/12/36), 170.

Economic Department. The editors could not quite down the suspicion that the two instructors would have been given permanent appointments had it not been for their unorthodox economic views, or perhaps for Walsh's attack on ex-President Lowell's opposition to the child-labor amendment.[25]

There were also cases in which these two sources of protest - economic hardship and infringements on academic freedom--were even more explicitly joined. The Nation in 1935 alerted its readers to "Trouble in Paradise": a situation in Westchester County where a ten per cent pay cut was imposed on teachers and where two instructors were subsequently dismissed for joining a movement to have their pay restored.[26] And Blanche Hofrichter of the Classroom Teachers Groups wrote to the Nation's editors that the New York City superintendent of schools, then supporting a loyalty oath for teachers was the same man whose budget "carries on the policy of overcrowding classes, of ignoring the fifteen thousand unemployed teachers, and of taking no notice of the effect of five years of crisis on the health and well-being of the children.[27]

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[25] Editorial, "The Case of Dr. Conant," New Republic, 95 (6/15/38), 145-6. For the Nation's commentary on this case cf. v. 144, pp. 425, 451, 634. This last editorial note praised Conant for appointing a faculty committee to investigate the case. Another cause célèbre of the decade was the firing of Jerome Davis from the faculty of the Yale Divinity School. This occasioned much comment from the journals, including a special section in the New Republic: "Yale on Trial: Two Documents in the Case of Jerome Davis," 89 (11/18/36), 86-92.

[26] J. W. (pseud.), "Trouble in Paradise," Nation, 141 (7/24/35), 107.

Most of this was, of course, familiar material to regular journal readers. The plot was an old one, though the casts of heroes and villains continually changed. But there were three elements during the 1930's which were at least partially new: first was the sheer quantity of material on educator's difficulties - evidence of the effects of both depression and repression on instructors; second was the fact that where the journals had in an earlier period found it necessary to protect liberals and home-grown radicals, they now found themselves defending Communists and fellow-travelers as well; and third - although since 1918 both journals had supported teachers' and professors' unions - they now were supporting reality as well as rhetoric. Teacher unions were growing and were assuming a new militancy, and the journals became inextricably involved in the ideological struggles going on within the organizations. In the sections which follow, we shall explore the ways in which journal support for militant activist unions (along with the general liberal drift to a united front with the Communists) led first to sympathy for Communist factions in the American Federation of Teachers and then, at the end of the decade, to hostility and resistance to such factions.

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[27] Blanche Hofrichter, "The Loyalty Oath" (Letter to editors), Nation, 139 (10/10/34), 407.

III

The liberals who edited and wrote for the Nation and the New Republic during the 1930's had no sympathy for the view that men should acquiesce meekly in their fates. Nor did they agree with those exponents of economic or social laissez-faire who held that natural forces would gradually and inevitably restore better conditions. The journalists' response to all social challenges was to plan, to organize, to act. At one time, of course, Herbert Croly had hoped that idealistic businessmen might be persuaded to take the lead in this necessary social planning, but he increasingly came to look to workers and other oppressed groups as the sources of creative change. And Croly's successors moved even further from a policy of progress through persuasion of the privileged to one based on the organized power of the less privileged.

Thus in the 1930's the New Republic and the Nation wasted little effort in trying to convince businessmen and conservatives (few of whom read the journals anyway) to deal more justly with workers, teachers, or others over whom they wielded influence. Instead they used the pages of their weeklies to try to strengthen alliances between workers, intellectuals, civil servants, educators, racial minorities, and other groups which had been hurt by the depression. They tried to show such groups that they had grievances in common and that only organized political and economic action would enable them to better their conditions.

This general position was evident in many editorials, articles, and letters on educational matters carried by the journals during these years. Teachers were encouraged to support political candidates who would aid their cause and to punish those who hurt them, to demand federal assistance in areas where states and municipalities failed to meet their responsibilities, and most important, to organize strong unions and other associations which would give them real power in their dealings with school committees, boards of trustees, politicians, and the public.

During the early 1930's, the Chicago school situation was especially difficult. Many teachers lost their jobs, while those who kept their positions were plagued with arduous working conditions, pay cuts, and unconscionably long delays in getting their salaries. After school staffs had not been paid for almost a year, the editors of the Nation praised the action of those educators who had "staged an educational program of their own consonant with the modern 'learn by doing' formula." This "educational program" included a march by 5000 teachers on the city's banks and another demonstration in which the educators pulled down a flag which flaunted the ironic slogan of the World's Fair - "A Century of Progress."[28]

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[28] Editorial, "Teachers' Progress," Nation, 136 (5/10/33), 516. Unfortunately, the "educational program" referred to seems to have been a two-way process. The editorial noted also that the teachers received "an object lesson in civics from policemen's nightsticks."

When, with the help of a Reconstruction Finance Loan, the teachers were given part of their back pay, the journal carried an article by a Chicago teacher who declared that the teachers' own efforts - including the "thousands of letters, telegrams, and post cards to President Roosevelt did more than anything else . . . " to get the loan passed.[29]

Letters to the editors of both journals also called for political and direct action of this type. The Unemployed Teachers Association demanded that the political parties include in their platforms planks calling for the maintenance of school budgets, relief for unemployed teachers, and reduction of class size, and announced meetings to protest "economic retrenchment in education."[30] The Classroom Teacher Groups called for pressure on New York's Governor Lehman and state senators to get them to provide necessary state school aid. And Eunice Langdon tied the whole program together in calling for "equalization of the tax burden . . . State and federal aid to education . . . the strengthening of teachers' associations everywhere and determined action against false 'economies' . . . if the schools and the teaching profession are to be saved from disaster."[31]

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[29] Edith Smith (pseud.), "Chicago Teachers Are Paid," Nation, 139 (9/19/34), 322-3.

[30] Letter from Unemployed Teachers Association, Nation, 135 (9/28/32), 284. Cf. also the letter from New York Association of Unappointed Teachers, New Republic, 71 (5/25/32), 49; also the letter from Haakon Chevalier, Nation, 141 (9/25/35), 353-4.

[31] Letter from Paul Gastwirth of the Classroom Teacher Groups, Nation, 139 (8/15/34), 185; Eunice Langdon, "The Teacher Faces the Depression, Nation, 137 (8/16/33), 185.

But to the liberals associated with the journals, the key element in progress for educators was organization. Robert Morss Lovett, a member of the New Republic's editorial board, had an extravagant conception of the role of educators, claiming that "under democracy, even more than under communism, the teachers are the only crew that can work the ship of state." He thus advocated a reformist role for the schools, but believed that such a role could become a reality only "through an enlightened, radical and militantly organized teaching force, conscious of its power and its responsibilities, /and/ capable of gaining the support of public opinion against the representatives of vested interests."[32]

The logical place to look for leadership in effectively organizing educators was to the National Education Association, the country's largest teacher organization. The liberal journals had, however, never put much faith in the N.E.A., which they saw as conservative and bureaucratic. But during the 1930's, as the N.E.A. became somewhat more aggressive in its work for teacher welfare, the journals saw occasional signs of hope for the organization. In 1936 the Nation had a few kind words for the recent convention of the N.E.A.'s

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[32] Lovett, "The Sovereignty of Teaching," (review of four books on education by George Coe, Bertrand Russell, David Snedden, and W. H. Kilpatrick), New Republic, 73 (11/23/32), 52. Lovett's vigorous position was much like that taken by the Progressive Education Association's Committee on Social and Economic Problems in "A Call to the Teachers of the Nation," (New York: John Day, 1933), p. 26. For a discussion of the report, (written by George Counts), in the context of the period, cf. Cremin, Transformation, pp. 261-5.

Department of Superintendence, which had displayed a "refreshing eagerness to face realities and to act on them." The administrators had, for instance, denounced "in unmistakable language" recent invasions of academic freedom. And the New Republic saw at the summer convention of the N.E.A. itself signs that teachers were beginning at long last to realize "their humiliating position" under the thumbs of conservative school boards.[33] Again the following year the Nation saw evidence at the Superintendents' convention that educators who ten years before had been a "peculiarly inert and submissive body of citizens" were now, "perhaps because of their experience with professional heresy-hunters . . . beginning to show courage and social intelligence."[34]

These were straws in the wind, but they did not represent the fundamental change in teachers' attitudes and organization which the times seemed to require. The N.E.A. might be somewhat more progressive than it had been in the past, but it had not moved far enough to satisfy the militant liberal journalists. Their basic position was well summed up in a Nation editorial of 1938:

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[33] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 142 (3/11/36), 299-300. The New Republic also saw glimmerings of hope here, noting "the vigorous testimony brought forward in the recent meeting of the Division of Superintendence . . . that teachers must organize on behalf of freedom in the schools." (v. 86, pp. 178-9). The New Republic quote on the N.E.A.'s general convention appeared in an editorial paragraph in v. 87, p.253.

[34] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 144 (3/6/37), 254.

> The N.E.A. . . . has proved a slow-moving group, embodying all the inertias of the American social system. It is to American education what the A.F. of L. is to American labor. It has neither the educational vision of the Progressive Education Association nor the social militancy of the American Federation of Teachers.[35]

The liberal journalists thus put little faith in the N.E.A., but agreed rather with William Gellerman that progress for educators in the economic sphere and in academic freedom, required "the formation of strong teachers' organizations, allied with labor and working groups, to offset the effect of the American Legion and its allies."[36] During the 1920's both journals had looked to the labor education movement to ally workers and educators for the promotion of their common interests; now the general union movement, embracing both blue-collar and professional workers, seemed to present similar opportunities.

For the liberal journalists, interest in union for teachers and professors was, of course, nothing new. During the 1920's they had promoted "industrial democracy" in the schools through the unionization of teachers.[37] But teachers' unions made little progress during that decade, and in the 1930's the journals had the welcome opportunity of supporting a movement that was growing and which seemed full of promise for success. On the fifteenth anniversary of the New York Teachers Union the Nation extended its congratulations to the organization for its "consistently progressive educational and social program." The union was a welcome ally of the Nation in a number of causes: it had fought witch-hunts, militarism, political control of the schools, and discrimination against minority-group teachers. Equally important, it had supported new and improved educational programs. Though administrators might object to teachers' unions, the editors declared their belief that "the close association of teachers with labor groups is a wholesome thing . . . ."[38]

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[35] Editorial, "Three R's Beleaguered," Nation, 147 (7/9/38), 33. There is considerable continuity in the policy of the liberal journals on this matter. An editorial in the New Republic for February 19, 1966 shows sympathy for the A.F.T. and hostility toward the N.E.A. Cf. "Are Teachers Workers?", v. 154, p. 7.

[36] Editorial paragraph, "Education Versus the Legion," New Republic, 95 (7/6/38), 235.

[37] Cf., for example, Henry R. Linville, "A Job for Teachers Organizations," New Republic, 36 (11/7/23 - supplement), 9-11.

New Republic readers, too, were exposed to similar favorable comment on the growth of teacher unions. In 1936 an article in that journal noted the impressive growth of the American Federation of Teachers from only 5000 members in 1931 to 24,000 in 1936. This was seen by the authors as part of a larger movement in which many white collar and professional workers - musicians, social workers, journalists, and even ministers - had formed unions to protect and advance their interests. Later that same year the editors reported on the convention of the A.F.T., noting that membership had climbed to 35,000 and that special efforts were underway to organize college faculties and W.P.A. teachers. Under the new leadership of Jerome Davis, the editors looked for further gains by a teachers' union "united, militant, and facing forward."[39]

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[38] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 132 (3/18/31), 287.

Hopes for the organization of college faculties were not entirely misplaced, and by 1936 sixteen out of the two hundred A.F.T. locals were to be found on college campuses.[40] In forming unions, college instructors had the enthusiastic support of liberal journalists. In 1934 Villard asserted that college teachers "ought now to organize in unions, following the example of editorial writers and reporters." In proletarian rhetoric rather startling from a patrician liberal he demanded: "Is not this hour of revolution the time for them to demand representation upon the boards of trustees, to acquire some voice in how much freedom there shall be upon the university campuses and what shall be taught and not taught? Mr. Roosevelt declares that he is freeing industry from innumerable shackles. Why not strike a few from the wrists of university professors?"[41]

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[39] Caroline Whitney and Albion Hartwell, "Professional Workers Unionize," *New Republic*, 86 (2/19/36), 41-43; Editorial, "Organized Teachers Speak Out," *New Republic*, 88 (9/9/36), 118. As one might expect, the Communist *New Masses* was even more militant than the liberal journals in its support of teacher unions, and it continually urged teachers to make use of the "strike-weapon." However, it tended to fall into party-line catch phrases on this as on other issues. Two editorials, for example, appearing about seven weeks apart, used the identical phrase in urging teachers' unions to use collective bargaining and strikes against all "exploiters, civil-service or otherwise,": 10 (1/9/34), 4; 10 (2/27/34), 4. The story of the growth of the A.F.T. is told in rather disjointed fashion in *Organizing the Teaching Profession*, by The Commission on Educational Reconstruction of the A.F.T. (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955). Among the ten Commission members were George Axtelle, John Childs, George Counts, Carl Megel, and Robert Ulich.

[40] Whitney and Hartwell, 42.

IV

Journal support for teacher unions was not, of course, an isolated phenomenon; the Nation and the New Republic were at this time vigorously backing the growth of unionism throughout the American economy.[42] With the support of the Roosevelt administration, and bolstered by such measures as the Norris-LaGuardia Act (1932), section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act (1933), and the Wagner Act (1935), union membership was growing apace. The aggressive organizing efforts of the Committee of Industrial

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[41] Villard, "The Plight of Higher Education," Nation, 138 (3/28/34), 349. Cf. also Harold Laski, "Self-Determination for Faculties," New Republic, 75 (6/21/33), 149-50 and the editorial on Laski's article in the same issue, p. 138.

[42] A number of the liberal journalists were union members and activists as well as union supporters. Bruce Bliven wrote an article, "Union Card Journalist," when he joined the Newspaper Guild, A.F. of L. in 1936: New Republic, 88 (9/9/36), 125-6. Heywood Broun, who was at different times on the staff of both journals, was an influential president of the Guild. A note in the Nation in 1937 stated that the editorial department was represented by the Newspaper Guild, and all other departments by the Bookkeepers, Stenographers, and Accountants Union. Nation, 144 (5/22/37), 604.

Organization (which split from the A.F. of L. in 1936) gave a real boost to union enrollments, which increased from fewer than 3,000,000 in 1933 to over 8,000,000 in 1939.[43]

Amidst all this rapid growth a number of American unions, including the A.F.T., found themselves with a serious Communist problem.[44] New York Local 5 of the A.F.T. was plagued by Communist factionalism for years, until in October, 1935, many of the non-Communist members resigned to form the New York Teachers Guild. This, of course, left Local 5 firmly in the hands of the Communist faction.[45] Throughout this controversy both the Communist and the anti-Communist factions used the pages of the Nation and the New Republic in seeking to build support for their positions. The Nation, for example, carried in 1935 statements both by Abraham Lefkowitz for the anti-Communists and of the United Committee to Save the Union, representing the Communist elements. The Committee accused Lefkowitz and his group of red-baiting and the sin of "dual unionism," and announced that his charges would be "refuted in the daily press and in the columns of liberal periodicals."[46]

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[43] The figures are from Milton Derber, "Growth and Expansion," in Labor and the New Deal, M. Derber and Edwin Young, editors (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 3. On the labor movement during the New Deal, see also Schlesinger, Coming of the New Deal, Part VI; Henry Pelling, American Labor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), ch. VII.

[44] On the general problem of Communists in the unions during this period, see Bernard Karsh and Phillips Garman, "The Impact of the Political Left," chapter three of Derber and Young.

[45] Sidney C. Gould, "A History of the New York City Teachers Union and Why It Died," The Educational Forum, 29 (Jan., 1965), 211. The most thorough and authoritative treatment of this whole development is The Communist and the Schools, by Robert W. Iversen, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959).

Although the liberal journals never attempted to categorically "refute" the position taken by Lefkowitz, Linville, and the other anti-Communists, for a period of several years they did provide aid and comfort to the pro-Communist factions. In 1936 both journals praised the A.F.T. convention's refusal to follow the advice of the A.F. of L. and eject Local 5.[47] In early 1939 when the national A.F.T. was rocked by a struggle between pro-Communist and anti-Communist factions, the *New Republic* carried a lengthy article by A.F.T. president Jerome Davis denouncing attacks on his organization by "a miscellaneous assortment of sharpshooters stretching from the Dies committee all the way to John L. Childs of Teachers' College, Columbia University." Davis declared "with complete assurance that the charges of communist control" of the A.F.T. were untrue. At any rate, Davis felt that the union need not be concerned about the political activities of its members, believing that "every teacher has the right to be a Republican, Democrat, Socialist, Communist, or support any other party."[48]

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[46] Lefkowitz, "The Case for the Union," *Nation*, 141 (10/9/35), 410-11; United Committee to Save the Union, "The Opposition Replies," 411-12.

[47] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 143 (8/29/36), 227; Editorial, "Organized Teachers Speak Out," *New Republic*, 88 (9/9/36), 118.

[48] Jerome Davis, "The Teachers' Struggle for Democracy," *New Republic*, 98 (3/15/39), 161.

The editors of the New Republic found Davis' argument persuasive. To them the A.F.T. was "a power for enlightenment and American principles," which deserved "the loyalty and united action of all its members." They believed, with Davis, that the Federation was "an efficient and progressive trade union, not led or influenced by Communists."[49] This editorial absolution called forth a vigorous response from George W. Hartmann of Columbia University, who offered considerable evidence of Stalinist control of the union. He noted also that a number of outstanding liberals, including John Dewey, Harold Rugg, Louis Hacker, and John Childs, had resigned because of Stalinist factionalism in the union, and called attention to George Counts' recent Social Frontier exposé of Communist damage to the union.[50]

Hartmann noted that the A.F.T.'s struggle with Communists was not an isolated phenomenon, but was part of a larger struggle in which the entire labor movement was engaged. And he rejected the "superstitution of many liberals that any critique of Stalinist tactics means that one is an agent of the Dies Committee . . . " He closed with the hope that "Dr. Davis, The New Republic, or anyone else who is disposed to 'whitewash' the present Union administration in New York will first make a thorough and independent inquiry" into the situation.[51]

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[49] Editorial, "Teachers Together," New Republic, 98 (3/15/39), 151-2.

[50] George W. Hartmann, "Union Teachers and Intellectual Integrity," (letter to editors), New Republic, 98 (4/26/39), 337-8; Cf. also the rebuttal by Jerome Davis and the editorial paraphrase of letters from Charles Hendley and Edwin Burgum, pp. 340-341; also the editorial paragraph, "Teachers' Union Politics," New Republic, 99 (5/17/39), 30. Counts' article, "Whose Twilight?" appeared in the Social Frontier, 5 (Feb., 1939), 135-140. It was a response to James Wechsler's article, "Twilight at Teachers College," Nation, 147 (12/17/38), 661-3.

But neither the Nation nor the New Republic, involved as they were in maintaining the "popular front" against fascism, was disposed to undertake such an inquiry. The journals carried letters from John Childs, Leo Huberman, and others on both sides of the dispute, but they failed to perceive and expose the very real control which Communists and their allies had established over the A.F.T.[52] And - perhaps amidst the excitement and liberal embarrassment over the Hitler-Stalin Pact, they completely ignored George Counts' victory over the Communists at the August, 1939 convention of the A.F.T.

One interesting footnote to this whole development - in the category of "what might have been" - is the fact that George Counts was for a time under consideration for

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[51] Hartmann, New Republic, v. 98, p. 338.

[52] Cf. letters from the following: Executive Board, New York College Teachers' Union, Nation, 148 (1/14/39), 76; John Childs, in the same issue, p. 76; Howard D. Langford, Nation, 148 (1/28/39), 132; Leo Huberman, New Republic, 97 (1/18/39), 317. Iversen concludes that the Communists had more success in the A.F.T. than in any other union in the A.F.L., though even in the A.F.T. "the control was not absolute." (p. 108). Davis, although not himself a Communist, was elected president of the A.F.T. with Communist support in 1936, 1937, and 1938, and was supported by them again when he lost to George Counts in 1939. (Iversen, ch. 5, passim).

the leadership of the Nation. In 1935 Oswald Villard wrote to Dewey expressing his approval of Counts' work with the Social Frontier, and asking Dewey's opinion of Counts as a possible managing editor for the Nation.[53] Dewey's reply is not known, but it is interesting to speculate on the effects Counts' direction of the Nation might have had on this situation. Counts was radical enough to have developed his sympathies with Communism earlier than most liberals, yet realistic and perceptive enough to have abandoned them more quickly than most. Thus two years before the Nation and the New Republic awoke to the dangers of Communism, Counts was, in the Social Frontier, vigorously flaying Stalinist domination of the A.F.T. and of other unions, and pointing out the perils of the whole popular front policy. His direction of the Nation - had he had enough autonomy and power to make it a vehicle of his own political and educational views - might have helped a significant segment of American liberalism to recover more quickly than it did from the united front malady.

But educators like Counts, Rugg, Childs, and Hartmann were forced to fight out their battle against Communist domination of the A.F.T. without the aid and support from the liberal journals which they had been able to count on in most of their educational efforts. Not until the Hitler-Stalin pact had begun to re-orient their entire political perspective did the journals take the offensive against Communist influence in the A.F.T. and the labor movement generally.[54] And only after the anti-Communists had begun to achieve some success in their struggle with the Stalinist faction in the A.F.T. did the journals offer words of encouragement.

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[53] Letter from Villard to Dewey, 9/25/35, in Villard Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

In early 1941 the New Republic admitted at last that several A.F.T. locals had been "dominated by the Stalinists, whose activities had been designed to aid the Communist movement whatever the effect might be on the organization." The editors had come to realize that "it is impossible for a working trade union to continue with a large minority which is unscrupulously resolved to serve only the purposes of a single foreign country, even at the risk of destroying the union . . . ."[55] When a spokesman for Local 5 protested this editorial, the editors declared their confidence that "the comments of The New Republic will be shown to be justified." And, interestingly enough, they cited in support of their position the testimony of a group including Dewey, Niebuhr, and Childs - men who, after several years of struggle against the Stalinists, must have had mixed feelings concerning the belated support now given them by the New

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[54] On the Nation's break with the United Front, cf. Freda Kirchwey, "Communists and Democracy," Nation, 149 (10/17/39), 399-401.

[55] Editorial, "Communists and Teachers," New Republic, 104 (2/24/41), 265.

Republic.[56]

The Nation now jumped with equal enthusiasm onto the anti-Communist bandwagon, and approved the action of the A.F.T. executive council in seeking expulsion of the Communist locals: "If a majority of the members of the union sustain the council, the A.F. of L. will with one sweeping gesture have rid itself of a growth that has been sapping it internally and exposing it to attack from without."[57] And when the executive council move succeeded and the Communist locals were expelled, both journals expressed their satisfaction at the outcome. The New Republic hoped that the break away from Communist influence might continue and that "within a few months the A.F.T. will be in a position to assure the people of the United States that no part of its organization is dominated by fanatical foes of democracy and the democratic process."[58] The Nation agreed that the previous Communist domination had been "intolerable" and that the expulsion of the offending locals was clearly justified.[59]

There was, of course, the danger that the newly-awakened liberals, in order to expiate their past political sins, might demand harsh and even undemocratic treatment for their former Communist allies.[60] But this did not occur. Both journals, while supporting the expulsion of the Communist locals, insisted that the purge should be carried out democratically and that the rights of innocent teachers should be protected. The New Republic welcomed the "democratic action that puts the final decision where it should be, in the hands of the whole membership."[61] The Nation proposed that the union set up a committee to weed out "party-liners," and defended this procedure on the grounds that union membership was not required for holding a teaching position.[62] When the union adopted just such a procedure, the Nation declared that "the desperate remedy seems to us justified," and hoped that it would effectively keep out the Stalinists without hurting those members who were above suspicion.[63]

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[56] Laurence E. Prendergast (Secretary, Local 5), Letter to editors, and reply by editors, New Republic, 104 (4/7/41), 472.

[57] Editorial, "Communists and Unions," Nation, 152 (3/1/41), 228-9.

[58] Editorial, "The Purge in the AFT," New Republic, 104 (6/16/41), 809-10.

[59] Editorial paragraph, Nation 152 (6/21/41), 711.

A basic conviction of both journals was that purging the Communists was a job for the union itself. They criticized the action of the Rapp-Coudert committee of the New York legislature in seizing lists of union members. This was an act of intimidation intended not just as a blow at the Stalinists but as "an attack on the union itself."[64] When the probe reached New York City colleges, the *New Republic* proposed that the city Board of Higher Education establish a committee of respected educators to investigate not questions of belief - as indicated by party membership - but of individual "performance in objective and creative teaching."[65]

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[60] A number of the former liberal journalists, including John Chamberlain, John T. Flynn, Suzanne LaFollette, and Jonathan Mitchell, have, in fact, become exceedingly conservative, hard-line anti-Communists. Mitchell, LaFollette, and Chamberlain have all served as contributors to William Buckley's conservative National Review.

[61] New Republic, v. 104, p. 265.

[62] Nation, v. 152, pp. 228-9.

[63] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 152 (6/21/41), 711.

This proposal appealed to liberal A.F.T. members like Vice-president Mark Starr, who wrote: "I only hope that we can set up the group of scholars suggested by you and not leave the investigation to the mixed motivation and dubious methods of such a political body as the Coudert Committee."[66] Starr's praise for the *New Republic*'s position may be taken as evidence - or at least as a convenient symbol - for the fact that the liberal journalists had politically come home again. They were, after a drift to the far left, back in the familiar liberal stance of opposing doctrinaire positions on both ends of the political spectrum. They had rejoined men like Dewey, Childs, and Starr, who had maintained all along that the true liberal, to be consistent and effective, must oppose Communism as vigorously as he resists Fascism.

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[64] Editorial paragraph, *Nation*, 152 (2/8/41), 143.

[65] Editorial, "Communist Teachers," *New Republic*, 104 (3/17/41), 359-60.

[66] Mark Starr, Letter to editors, *New Republic*, 104 (4/14/41), 502-3.

V

In April, 1941, the Nation printed a letter from Max Kline which - because it puts much of the above material in perspective - is worth quoting at length. Kline wrote:

> Your recent comments on Communists and unions were amusing and irritating. You wrote on March 1, for example, that "Until two weeks ago this blight (i.e., Communist influence in the Teachers Union) was treated pretty much in the spirit of Mark Twain's remark about the weather. Everybody talked about it but nobody did anything."

Kline then reviewed the efforts, going back to 1932, of men like himself and Dewey to rid the A.F.T. of Communist factionalism. He reminded the editors of the founding of the Teachers Guild in 1935 when efforts failed to wrest control of Local 5 from the Communists. He then asked the obvious question:

> Now, between 1933 and 1935, did we get the support of the Nation, the Post, and other organs of liberal opinion? /He might well have included the New Republic, and extended the period to 1939/. Quite the contrary. It was explained in those journals that we were impatient with minority opinion, that we were seeking to retain power by undemocratic methods, that we were "red-baiting, etc." The Nation, with its tremendous influence among liberals, could have assisted us in our struggle against the well-organized program and unscrupulous tactics of the Communists in our union. But in those days the Nation and the Post were catering to the party line.[67]

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[67] Max Kline, Letter to Editors, Nation, 152 (4/12/41), 456.

The editors of the *Nation* made no response to Kline's attack. In fact, neither journal alluded to what was so obvious to Kline and others - their dramatic shift from backing a united front with the Communists in the Teachers Union to support for their expulsion from the Federation. The editors may well have been embarrassed that a temporary alliance between Communism and Nazism in Europe should have caused the break-up of a liberal-Communist alliance in America. Or perhaps they assumed that the reason for their drift away from sympathy for Communism was too obvious to require discussion. At any rate, men like Kline no doubt felt quite justified in asking, in effect, "Where were you when we needed you most?" and in expressing irritation at the *Nation*'s blasé return to political realism.

Thus, with a little understandable carping from those who had kept the liberal faith, the journals by late 1939 had rejoined men like Dewey who had all along the foresight and perception to see through Communism's democratic facade. But how may one explain the journals' earlier fall from liberal grace - their tenacious conviction that "you can do business with Stalin?" Basic to an understanding of this phenomenon are two elements: one domestic, one foreign. On the domestic front, both journals sought to maintain during the depression pressure from the left on the Roosevelt administration. In so doing, they were quite willing to join forces with all those - including Communists - who seemed to share their views. In the foreign sphere, the liberals had an abiding horror of the fascist dictatorships which successively took power in Italy, Germany, and Spain. While the democracies wavered in the face of the fascist threat, the liberal journalists believed Russia was providing (as in Spain) the only effective opposition. The Nation and the New Republic were occasionally critical of denials of liberty in Russia itself, but they managed to convince themselves that this was, first, better than the earlier tyranny of the Czars, and second, only a temporary stage required while Russia transformed herself into a prosperous liberal state.

This was the larger context in which American liberals placed much of their united front effort in the 1930's. And such considerations had particular force in journal policy on labor. The organization of both blue-collar and professional workers seemed both necessary and - at long last - possible in the 1930's. The Nation and the New Republic had little faith in the ability of old-line A.F.L. leadership to organize the unorganized, and the break with the C.I.O. in 1936 seemed evidence enough of the failure of the conservative unionists. By contrast, the Communists were functioning most effectively in labor organization. They were able not only to bring workers into the unions, but to form them into militant, effective cadres. In 1938 the New Republic admitted that within the unions, because of Communist "zeal and ability, the number of offices that they hold is out of proportion to their numerical strength."[68] After its break with the united front, the Nation made a similar, though grudging admission. In a comparison somewhat unflattering to both groups, it referred to the Communists as "the Tammany Hall of the labor movement," and added that "they have the discipline, the zeal, the central boards of strategy, and above all the political axes to grind."[69]

But herein lay the ambiguity and the problem in the journal's position. While praising the Communists for their organizing ability, and while holding that labor needed the Communists for that reason, the journals failed to see the other half of the equation: that the Communists needed and used the unions for their own purposes as well. The Nation and the New Republic seemed to feel, in short, that the Communists were just strong enough to help the unions, but not powerful enough to hurt them. Thus, in 1939 the New Republic declared - after praising the effectiveness of Communist unionists, that "no important part of the labor movement is now in danger from the Reds . . . " If labor leaders made "use of a few Communists for union work, we may be sure it is because the persons in question are able and conscientious trade-unionists who do not allow party politics to interfere with their jobs."[70]

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[68] Editorial, "Mr. Frey Is Scared," New Republic, 96 (8/24/38), 59-60.

[69] Nation, v. 152, pp. 228-9.

[70] New Republic, v. 96, p. 60.

This reluctance to criticize Communist influence in the A.F.T. and in other unions was an expression of what might be termed "reactive liberalism." The journalists seemed to assume that because the Communists were under attack by conservatives, there must be some good in their cause. And they hesitated to denounce the Communists for fear of strengthening the hands of their conservative enemies. Thus in early 1939 the New Republic, in opposing Matthew Woll's attack on the A.F.T., asked: "Isn't it time for intelligent people to realize that the red bogey is useful only to blackshirts and brownshirts and their allies?"[71]

The Nation, out of a similar fear of the fascist right, was also reluctant to draw any lines between left-wing groups. Its editors argued against taking a first step against Communists in unions for fear that it might lead inexorably to a fourth step to reaction. Thus while admitting that unions might well be watchful of Communist as well as other brands of factionalism, the editors felt that the current campaign against Communists was perilous. For "once you begin attacking Communists as such, your next step . . . is to attack progressives for 'following the line.' The step after that . . . is to attack all progressives. And beyond that looms a reactionary trade-union movement."[72]

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[71] Editorial, "Teachers Together," New Republic, 98 (3/15/39), 152.

[72] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 146 (2/12/38), 171.

With such a position it was well to emphasize the similarities of Communists to other groups rather than their differences. The editors of the *New Republic* sought in August, 1938, to make the attack on Communists appear absurd by declaring them no less worthy of union benefits than "Republicans or New Dealers or Townsendites or adherents of Father Divine."[73] Such a statement perhaps gives as much insight as any into the positions of the journals: they failed to take the Communist threat seriously. Stalinists in the unions seemed at worst a factional irritant and at best a militant organizing force. But at any rate, they were seen as no more of a danger to unions and union democracy than were members of major political parties or of bizarre political and religious sects.

By 1941, however, the *New Republic* could admit, in reference to the A.F.T., that "the widespread reports of Communist domination in these locals, going back many years, have enormously weakened the movement for trade unionism among teachers."[74] They could insist without evident embarrassment that it was "too late in the twentieth century to be naive about either the objectives or the tactics of the Communists."[75] And the *Nation* could refer to the need for protecting those union "innocents, who are the easiest prey of the 'militant' Communists."[76] If the journalists had any feeling that the terms "naive" or "innocents" might well have applied to their own previous behavior, they did not betray it. They had followed their liberal lights where they led. They had analyzed with good journalistic sense the economic and political pressures on teachers; they had called, reasonably enough, for vigorous organizations to advance the interests of educators; but they had dissipated their energy and some of their prestige among liberals by failing to oppose those factions in the Teachers' Union which were less interested in educational reform and progress than in supporting Russia's tortuously shifting foreign policy. There is irony enough in the picture of liberals fleeing from fascism into an alliance with a totalitarianism of the left; that irony is deepened when their failure to defend true liberalism occurred in that area where free enquiry and expression was most important - education. When the Stalinist enemies of free thought were clamping their hold on an influential group of American teachers, the Nation and the New Republic were painfully slow to come to the aid of the beleaguered anti-Communists in the union. The liberal journals which had shown such insight into a variety of educational matters now failed in the 1930's to see the need for a truly independent and free organization of teachers. In all of their educational concerns over the years, this was doubtless their greatest failure: that for a time during the Great Depression the Nation and the New Republic sacrificed the interests of unions and of education to what they saw as the inexorable demands of international politics.

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[73] *New Republic*, v. 96, p. 60.

[74] *New Republic*, v. 104, p. 809.

[75] *New Republic*, v. 104, p. 359.

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[76] Editorial paragraph, Nation, 152 (6/21/41), 711.

Chapter Fifteen: Summary: The Depression, the Youth and the Unions

Like the earlier sections of this study which dealt with the 1910's and the 1920's, this analysis of the liberal journals' educational concerns during the 1930's has been necessarily selective. But the topics considered have not been those which are bizarre or singular. Instead, themes have been treated which contribute to an understanding of larger movements, and which may be used as indices of broader shifts in the educational concerns of the journals.

Our purpose in this chapter is to indicate briefly the connections between those topics which have been considered above and certain others which could be added to fill in the general picture. Among the themes which might be extensively treated in a truly comprehensive survey are journal relationships to:

1) the militant organizations of college students and other youth which flourished during the 1930's;
2) the ideological shift within a segment of the progressive education movement from pragmatic liberalism to quasi-Marxist radicalism;

3) separable (though not separate) from item two above, the example of the new education in Russia;

4) federal involvement in education other than through the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A. (which have been trdated above).

Proper analysis of items three and four would require a substantial expansion of the scope of this study, and will not be considered here. It will perhaps be sufficient to note that the liberal journalists' interest in and sympathy for Russian education was but one aspect of their general position on Russia and Communism. Just as they felt America had much to learn from the "Russian experiment" in general, so they felt it could profitably emulate certain aspects of Soviet education.[1] On the matter of federal involvement in education we shall only note that the journals continually promoted an expanded role for the federal government in this area. As in the case of the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A., they called for greater federal financial assistance and educational planning, while at the same time warning against the dangers to free inquiry which existed in such a development.

Our chief concern in the sections which follow will be to analyze those developments cited in items one and two above. We shall consider first the response of the Nation and the New Republic to the student movement of the 1930's, and indicate the parallels between their positions in this area and those on teacher unions. Secondly, we shall explain briefly how the two weeklies reacted to the effort of George Counts and others to direct the progressive education movement into a more radical, activist position. We shall conclude by taking an overview of the journals' educational thinking in the 1930's and identifying elements both of contrast and continuity with the preceding periods.

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[1] Cf. for example "Soviet Russia - Land of Youth," by Harry F. Ward, Nation, 135 (8/3/32), 103-4.

I

The most appropriate place to begin this analysis is with a consideration of what James Wechsler has called the "revolt on the campus" in the 1930's.[2] During this decade many American college students (and some high school and out-of-school youth as well), involved themselves in a frenzy of organization and agitation. A significant and highly visible element of college students abandoned the "fun and games" ethos of the 1920's and threw their energies into the formation of a bewildering array of groups and causes. Some of their new organizations went through a cycle very similar to that followed by the American Federation of Teachers - from initial organization to growth and militancy, through a leftist "popular front" stage and Communist domination, and finally - in late 1939 - to the collapse of the united front.

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[2] James Wechsler, Revolt on the Campus (New York: Covici-Friede, 1935. Robert Morss Lovett, an editor of the New Republic, wrote an introduction to the volume. It received a generally favorable review from Edgar Johnson in the New Republic, although Johnson did note that the book contained "a few doctrinaire distortions." "Campus Activity," New Republic, 85 (12/4/35), 110.

Not surprisingly, the role of the Nation and the New Republic in this whole development paralleled that which they played in regard to the A.F.T. In the early 1930's they cheered from the sidelines as the students took the first tentative steps toward forming aggressive and socially-conscious organizations. In the mid-1930's they supported the united front of the Communists and Socialists as expressed in the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union. And finally, after the Hitler-Stalin Pact, they applauded as youth organizations broke the hold of the doctrinaire Marxists and moved back into the mainstream of pragmatic liberalism.

No effort will be made here to trace this whole development in detail. Instead, we will consider briefly two elements which are of particular significance to the relationship of liberal journalism and education: (1) journal support for the student movement as another example of the effort to build an alliance of intellectuals and other groups for reformist ends; (2) the Nation's and the New Republic's interest in student journalism as an agent of campus liberalism.

First of all, it is important to note that the support given by the journals to the student movement - particularly at the beginning of the decade - was placed in terms of rather familiar reformist objectives. As has been indicated throughout this study, the Nation and the New Republic were continually seeking allies in their fight for liberal causes. They thus encouraged youth organizations to work for more realistic and effective education, economic justice, peace, and racial progress.

Some of the earliest journal editorials on this subject put the matter in a primarily educational context. The weeklies were pleased to see students protesting against the innocuous and irrelevant education which was offered to them in most colleges. Thus in 1931 the editors of the Nation praised a Yale undergraduate publication, the Harkness Hoot, for its caustic critique of academic rigidity and conservatism and for exposing the "paucity of intellectual and social interest" in the college. This might have seemed a rather parochial matter, but the editors saw it in a larger context:

> The indictment has importance far beyond the academic limits of Yale. It matters a good deal to our national life that a great university . . . should seem to its thoughtful undergraduates to have done so little to develop the proper function of a university and subordinated intellectual enrichment to academic formalism, grandiloquent notions of organizing the incongruous, and material display. The revolt of youth against the education that is offered to it is a warning of intellectual discontent which no university can afford to ignore, for unless such evils as have been courageously exposed at Yale are done away with, the revolt is likely to carry far and wide.[3]

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[3] Editorial, "Revolt at Yale," Nation, 132 (5/6/31), 496.

Obviously, the "academic formalism" and other educational weaknesses which aroused the ire both of student editors and liberal journalists were not likely to disappear in short order, and the "revolt of youth" which the editors predicted was underway. The revolt did not, of course, restrict itself to the internal academic problems of the colleges. It soon became a political force, seeking not only educational change but economic, social, and racial reforms as well. And this broader movement also received vigorous encouragement from the liberal journalists. Less than a month after the editorial cited above, the Nation indulged in its perennial polemic on the occasion of college commencements. The editors noted the stirrings of liberalism and criticism among undergraduates, but feared that as usual, most of the "degree-bearing host" would go into business or professions, become apathetic and conservative, and leave the country worse off then they had found it. America's great need, according to the editors, was for a "stalwart, aggressive, self-conscious youth movement. It needs a sense of solidarity among its young intellectuals, its novelists, poets, dramatists, critics, artists, and scientists, not merely for the advancement of learning or various forms of art, but for the betterment of a dull, unthinking, and leaderless people.[4]

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[4] Editorial, "Leaders or Followers," Nation, 132 (6/17/31), 649.

The editors' hopes were soon realized. In 1932, the Communist-dominated National Student League joined the field with older, less militant organizations like the National Student Federation and the Student League for Industrial Democracy. Radicals like Sherwood Anderson, Roger Baldwin, Max Eastman, and Michael Gold used the correspondence columns of the New Republic to drum up adult support for the new group.[5] And the Nation backed the action of the Yale N.S.L. in participating in a New Haven foundry strike, denouncing the efforts of a Yale dean to discourage such student action. The editors again looked for the educational implications of the situation, noting that Yale was "doubtless offering courses in sociology and economics. Where is there a better place for a direct application of the theories taught in the classroom than in the town where the college is located?"[6]

But it was the militancy and social consciousness of the new organization which appealed to the liberal journalists, rather than its doctrinaire program. In 1934 the Nation carried an analysis of the whole youth movement, from its conservative to its radical fringes, which was somewhat critical of the divisive tactics of the Communist groups. The author, Seldon Rodman, predicted that such tactics would be self-defeating:

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[5] "Militant Students," (letter to editors), New Republic, 74 (3/15/33), 133. Some of the other signers were Mark Van Doren, Theodore Dreiser, Waldo Frank, Scott Nearing, Corliss Lamont, and John Dos Passos.

[6] Editorial, Nation, 138 (1/10/34), 30-31.

> The orthodox Marxist romanticizes the industrial worker and fails to understand the psychological prejudices of the average American from any class. The strange terminology and sentimental internationalism, the rigid adherence to doctrines no longer fresh or modified realistically to fit modern conditions, make it impossible for them either to appeal to the reason of new human material or to fire the imagination.[7]

But in spite of such critiques, the pressing desire for unity on the left encouraged some writers for the journals to support a united front of Communists and Socialists. James Wechsler, a former editor of the Columbia Spectator and a member of the Young Communist League, wrote for the New Republic in 1935 a plea for the emerging American Student Union. The A.S.U. was to bring together Socialists, Communists, and others in a "common front on palpably acute issues . . . " This joining of radical forces seemed to Wechsler "utterly sensible," for "when war and reaction are the order of the day, those dedicated to averting them are coming to realize that questions of ultimate social reorganization must not remain barriers."[8]

When the A.S.U. was actually established, in December, 1936, Nation editor Freda Kirchwey and R. M. Lovett, of the New Republic's editorial board, agreed to serve on its Advisory

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[7] Seldon Rodman, "Youth Meets in Washington," Nation, 138 (1/17/34), 70-71.

[8] Wechsler, "Ferment in the Colleges," New Republic, 84 (10/16/35), 266-8.

Committee.[9] New Republic editor Bruce Bliven wrote the preface for the first book published by the new united front. The book, War Our Heritage, was written by Wechsler and Joseph Lash, the Socialist Executive Secretary of the new organization.[10] Thus as they had done in the case of the Teachers Union, the leading liberal journalists demonstrated that their support for a united front outweighed any fears they had of Communist factionalism or domination.[11]

II

The Hitler-Stalin Pact of August, 1939, weakened this alliance, as it had most front movements. In December of that year, Wechsler (who had resigned from the Communist party in December, 1937 and joined the staff of the Nation), analyzed in that journal those forces which had created the alliance in the first place and which had given the Communists such power within it. The A.S.U., according to Wechsler, was

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[9] "A letter to you," (from American Student Union), New Republic 86 (2/12/36), back cover.

[10] Joseph Lash and James Wechsler, War Our Heritage (New York: International Publishers, 1936). For further background on this book, cf. James Wechsler's autobiography, The Age of Suspicion (New York: Random House, 1953), 86-7. This book gives an excellent inside view of the life of one of the leading student activists. Iversen identifies War Our Heritage as the first publication of the student united front. (p. 385, note 41).

[11] Iversen notes also that the Communists followed similar strategies within the Teachers Union and the A.S.U. (p. 139).

"made possible by the coincidence of Communist realism and anti-fascist sentiment on the campus." The members of the A.S.U. - Communist and non-Communist - "agreed that the Union's most important mission was to arouse and organize critical student thought; and its preoccupations ranged from the Spanish war to curricular reform." The power of the Communist groups within the A.S.U. was explained not by their numbers, but by their organization and militancy: "The Communist students act as a unified bloc in the election of delegates; they hold important posts in the Union's district apparatus because they are willing to do the difficult and unrewarding postgraduate work of organization . . . ."[12]

But by early 1941, the American Student Union, though still Communist-dominated, had been seriously weakened by defections. Both the Nation and the New Republic hailed the growth of a free, pragmatic, non-doctrinaire student movement. The New Republic admitted that "in the early years of the depression the Communists did a good job of helping young people to shake themselves out of their traditional lethargy, in college and out." But, they added, "the cost was high - a commitment to the Communist leadership of the ASU and the American Youth Congress." The Hitler-Stalin pact and the war had now enabled the youth organizations to begin to break the hold of the Communists on their organizations.[13]

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[12] James Wechsler, 'Politics on the Campus," Nation, 149 (12/30/39), 732-3. Wechsler is now the editor of the liberal New York Post and author of a nationally syndicated column.

[13] Editorial, "Have the Young Gone Sour?" New Republic, 104 (1/13/41), 39.

And non-Communist youth groups like the International Student Service were, with the guidance of liberals like Alvin Johnson, beginning to gain the ascendancy.[14] But, as in the case of the Teachers Union, only cataclysmic external events enabled the youth movement and its liberal journalistic allies to make the break with the united front.

It was clear to the journalists - as it is to the historian - that these shifts within the youth movement were part of this larger pattern. Robert Spivack stated in 1941: "Trends of thought and action among progressive young people are in many respects analogous to recent developments in the labor movement."[15] And it is this analogy - and others - that makes the whole process worthy of mention here. The motivations of the liberal journalists were similar in their responses to both the American Federation of Teachers and the American Student Union: in each case they thought that the interests of education, of students and teachers, and of liberalism generally would be served by militant organization. They hoped that the new organizations would be progressive forces within the schools and colleges, and that they would be instrumental in helping educational institutions to develop more relevant curricula and programs. But they wanted such groups to go beyond purely institutional, internal, educational matters. They encouraged them to extend their influence into domestic and international politics, and to use their numbers and their organizational powers to fight fascism, racism, war, and depression. And it was here, in both cases, that the difficulty began. Some of the liberal journalists assisted in the development of movements in which Communists soon got the upper hand, and in which they turned the organizations to the purposes of Russia's foreign policy rather than of educational institutions and personnel. But finally, in both cases, the liberal journalists encouraged the return of students and teachers to liberal, pragmatic, non-doctrinaire - but nonetheless militant - organization.

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[14] Robert G. Spivack, "Youth Reorganizes," Nation, 152 (1/18/41), 71-2.

[15] Spivack, Nation, v. 152, p. 73.

One interesting sidelight on this whole development was the benevolent attention given by the Nation and the New Republic to the role of student journalism in the radical youth movement. Much of the information which the journals printed about student activities was gleaned from the pages of student newspapers and magazines. The weeklies cited material from the Yale Daily News, the Harvard Crimson, the Columbia Spectator, and other college periodicals, and praised college editors for their vigorous support of liberal and radical causes. The Nation, in 1934, even included James Wechsler, editor of the Columbia Spectator, in its "Honor Roll for 1934," "for his able and courageous journalistic attack on all forms of reaction at the university."[16] Wechsler, in fact, moved from student journalism to the larger and more influential world of liberal journalism, and more than any other single person, made adult liberals aware of the "ferment on the campus."

This development, of course, was just one aspect of the larger alliance which the liberal journalists were trying to forge with the student movement in general. But it is not surprising that the personnel of the Nation and the New Republic should take a particular interest in the work of their radical young colleagues on campus publications. They recognized the key role that student editors could play in promoting activism in the colleges, and they gave them enthusiastic encouragement. American higher education was showing signs of life during the 1930's, and the Nation and the New Republic saw in liberal student publications a useful instrument of social and economic progress.

This analysis of student activism in the 1930's, and of the relationship of the liberal journals to it, should make it clear that there was considerable congruence between journal policy on the problems of teachers and on those of students. Explored from another direction, it would indicate significant overlap between journal consideration of the problems of youth as expressed variously through militant organizations and through such government programs as the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A. And, as we shall indicate below, the student movement was a product of the same economic and political conditions which gave rise to the activities of the "Educational Frontiersmen" of Columbia University during this decade.

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[16] For journal references to college publications, see: Nation, 138 (1/10/34), 30-31; Nation, 149 (12/30/39), 733. Cf. also "The Nation's Honor Roll for 1934," Nation, 140 (1/2/35), 3. Wechsler's first name was incorrectly given as "John." The Honor Roll also cited James Conant for his refusal to accept scholarship funds offered to Harvard by one of Hitler's associates.

III

During part of the 1930's an articulate, active group of progressive educators led by George Counts proposed that the American school go beyond social neutrality or even social reformism and participate in the radical reconstruction of American society. Some even declared that schools should indoctrinate youth in the principles of the collectivist social order which they expected to emerge from the existing chaos. One may well ask how the Nation and the New Republic related themselves to this new strain of educational ideology.

In view of the political and economic radicalism of the journals during this decade, and particularly in the light of their participation in the united front with the Communists, one might expect that Bliven, Kirchwey, and their colleagues would have thrown their weight enthusiastically behind this new movement. But this was not the case. Through a brief analysis of journal reaction to some of the key events and documents in this development, we shall see that the Nation and the New Republic were quite ambivalent about it. While agreeing with Counts that society required drastic overhauling (a "new deck rather than a new deal")[17] and that schools should play a role in social change, they were unwilling to countenance the use of indoctrination for this or any other purpose.

The first manifesto of the new educational radicalism was issued by George Counts at the February, 1932 convention of the Progressive Education Association. He threw down to the assembled educators the vigorous challenge of his speech title: "Dare Progressive Education be Progressive?" Such a question obviously required an explicit definition of progressivism, and this Counts provided. To him the term implied progress toward a specified social goal - something which most "progressive" schools lacked. Furthermore, he declared that organized teachers would have to abandon social neutrality, decide on the direction society should take, and then be willing to indoctrinate their students in the required social ideology.

Counts followed this up with further vigorous polemics delivered to the N.E.A. Department of Superintendence and to the National Council of Education. The three talks were then combined into a widely-distributed John Day Pamphlet entitled Dare the School Build a New Social Order? The first speech reached its intended audience of progressive educators when it was published in Progressive Education. But a much wider liberal group was addressed through the New Republic when parts of Counts' talks were published by that journal in May, 1932.[18]

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[17] This phrase was quoted from the Social Frontier by Zeitlin, p. 291.

The editor of the New Republic obviously felt that Counts' message, published under the title "Education - For What?" was important enough to justify the eight pages which they allotted it. But they gave it neither editorial support nor criticism. Instead they invited Agnes de Lima to write an article in reply to Counts, and announced her forthcoming rejoinder under the title "Red Teachers Can't Save Us." For some unexplained reason they ran her rebuttal as "A Communication" rather than as an article, and dropped the provocative title under which it had been announced.

Mrs. de Lima declared that Counts' call for indoctrination in the schools was at bottom no different from numerous other efforts at the educational imposition of various social theories. She noted that prohibitionists, utility companies, and Fundamentalists all used the schools for the propagation of their various messages. She added that "schools run by

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[18] George Counts, Dare the School Build a New Social Order? (New York: John Day, 1932); Progressive Education, 9 (April, 1932), 257-63. "Education - For What?" New Republic, 71 (5/18/32), 12-16; (5/25/32), 38-41.

Free Thinkers, Single Taxers, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Theosophists, and pink Socialists each reflect the dominant philosophy of those in control." She reminded the readers that the Catholic Church, Napoleon, Bismarck, and the Russian Communists all used their own schools to promote their own truths.

Mrs. de Lima was not unsympathetic with Counts' social goals, but she was adamantly opposed to indoctrination, and she felt that Counts was grossly unrealistic in expecting the teaching profession - "a class long trained to social docility" - to take the lead in social reconstruction. She quoted from Counts' own book, *The Social Road to Culture* (published two years earlier), on the conservative nature of the American school. She cited Randolph Bourne in defense of her position, and turned finally to Rousseau for authoritative support. She closed by declaring that Counts might disagree with Rousseau,"but to one observer at least, Rousseau appears not merely the better pedagogue, but the more realistic social revolutionist as well."

Other issues of the *New Republic* carried letters in response to Counts' article, as well as a rebuttal by Counts of a communication by Augusta Alpert.[19] Although these extended the controversy chronologically, they added little to the positions which had already been set forth by Counts and de Lima. But the significant point of all this for our purposes is that the editors themselves took no stand on the matter. They knew that Counts had set forth a controversial position, and in the interests of fair play and intellectual dialogue, asked Mrs. de Lima to reply. But they apparently felt that this was a dispute for educators to settle among themselves, and they merely provided journal space in which they could attempt to do so. The fundamental question of indoctrination the editors chose to ignore.

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[19] Agnes de Lima, "A Communication," *New Republic*, 71 (8/3/32), 317-18. The fact that the editors solicited her reply to Counts was told by Mrs. de Lima to the author in an interview of 11/18/65. Cremin cites Augusta Alpert's reply to Counts, but not the more extended one from de Lima. Cremin also states that Counts replied to Miss Alpert's charges: "She's exactly what I'm talking about." (*Transformation*, p. 259n). Although this is clearly the sense of his rebuttal, these words appear nowhere in the published letter.

IV

Another forthright statement of educational radicalism during the early 1930's was a book edited by William Heard Kilpatrick entitled The Educational Frontier. This volume, which appeared in 1933, included chapters by a number of leading educators, including Dewey, Boyd Bode, John Childs Bruce Raup, V. T. Thayer, and H. G. Hullfish. Although the authors did not come out in favor of indoctrination as Counts had done, they did propose that the schools involve students in far-reaching and critical social analysis, and they believed that such an educational program would produce adults willing and able to engage in fundamental social change.[20]

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[20] William H. Kilpatrick, ed. The Educational Frontier (New York: Century, 1933). For specific rejections of indoctrination by four of the authors, cf. 71 ff. (Dewey and Childs), 146 ff. (Kilpatrick), and 211-212 (Thayer).

Sidney Hook, who reviewed the book for the New Republic, called it "by far the most progressive and significant statement of the new educational philosophy which is emerging from the depression . . . " He was impressed by the book's profound social analysis, by its "radical reformulation" of educational theory, by its "politicalization of the philosophy of education." But for Hook, an independent Marxist, the book did not go far enough. He felt that what was lacking was a clear willingness to embrace the class struggle as the tool of social progress: "Political power has never passed from the hands of one class to another without class struggles; if the classless society is to be achieved, it is not by closing one's eyes to existing class struggles but by prosecuting them more widely and vigorously and intelligently."[21]

This clearly was as radical a statement of social and educational philosophy as one could expect. But it is equally clear that Bliven and Soule, the chief editors of the New Republic would not go as far. Although they were sympathetic toward Russia, and although they hoped for a collectivist economy in the United States, they never wholly embraced the doctrine of the class struggle as applicable to American conditions.[22] They still hoped that non-violent, rational means might usher in the democratic, socialist society which was their goal. And they were never quite dogmatic enough about their social beliefs to propose that they be indoctrinated into American youth.

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[21] Sidney Hook, "Education and Politics," (review of The Educational Frontier), New Republic, 75 (5/24/33), 49-50.

[22] Warren, Liberals and Communists, pp. 16-21.

While the New Republic apparently avoided taking a position on this issue, the Nation explicitly rejected indoctrination in the schools. In 1935 that journal reported a speech by Jesse Newlon to the N.E.A.'s Department of Superintendence, in which he declared that the teacher should teach as an absolute fact that "capitalism is not the solution to the nation's difficulties." The editors sympathized with Newlon's hope that more liberal thinking should penetrate the schools, and were aware that much "academic freedom too often means no more than a tame conformity."

But the Nation believed that education could not

> logically be regarded as a process of indoctrination unless one accepts the doctrine that final truth has been discovered and that learning must henceforth be concerned chiefly with the spread and preservation of that truth. So long as one believes that knowledge grows and changes, one must believe that the younger generation has a right to compare and question, and that free inquiry, not indoctrination, is the ideal of education.

The editors admitted that academic freedom was then under attack more by conservatives than by radicals, and they hoped for a greater recognition in the schools of the leftist position. They looked forward to a new and better social order, but declared in conclusion that 'nevertheless, the new society will need the critical spirit as much as the old one does, and the conception of free inquiry should not be lost."[23]

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[23] Editorial, "Propaganda and the Schools," Nation, 140 (3/13/35), 293.

The Social Frontier, a radical educational journal then edited by George Counts, took this Nation editorial as an example of "the futility of much current thinking about education." The writer (presumably Counts) felt that the Nation's educational philosophy was characterized by a "vague concept of freedom. . . . Collectivism becomes in this viewpoint only a theoretic alternative to capitalism which should, of course, be discussed - in the abstract - but not to the extent that youth be given the understanding that civilization itself depends upon our taking immediate steps forward to a social order in which inspiring vistas of cultural accomplishment replace the faded ideals of business enterprise." The editor was saying - in a rather oblique way - that teachers should not shrink from giving social truth to students, that "the platitudinous affirmation, 'there is something to be said for both sides'" was outmoded.[24]

At this point, in 1935, the Social Frontier, with its promotion of indoctrination for a collectivist social order, was more radical on educational matters than either the Nation or the New Republic. But, though the three journals differed on this particular issue, they all agreed on the necessity for a popular front with the Communists. The Social Frontier, for example, was at this point opposed to the resignation of non-Communists from the Communist-dominated New York local of the

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[24] Editorial, "A Liberal Weekly Comes Out for Freedom," Social Frontier, 1 (April, 1935), 7-8.

A.F.T. An editorial in the October, 1935 issue of that journal declared: "If liberal and labor forces cannot form a united front, if they continue to weaken themselves in bitter factional and sectarian struggles, there is no hope."[25]

But Counts, the editor, became increasingly disillusioned with the popular front, and began to part company with the Communists on various issues. By 1938 he was leading the fight to break the hold of Communists on the Teachers Union.[26]

Beginning with the issue of October, 1937, the Social Frontier was edited by George Hartmann, with William H. Kilpatrick as chairman of the editorial board. Both Hartmann and Kilpatrick opposed the united front, and they were not reluctant to criticize the Communists. In December, 1938 the editors went so far as to say that "The Social Frontier glories in the fact that real live Stalinists have no use for our brand of democratic collectivism . . . " And in May, 1939, they informed their readers of the leftist pressures to which they had been subjected ever since they "began to whack away at Stalinist influence within the Teachers Union, the American League for Peace and Democracy, the American Student Union, and other organizations which the Communist Party considers worthy of its attention."[27]

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[25] Editorial, "A Plea for Unity," Social Frontier, 2 (October, 1935), 3-4.

[26] Iversen, pp. 115, 199-200.

[27] Social Frontier, 4 (June, 1938), 276. The quotations are from 5 (December, 1938), 68 and 5 (May, 1939) 228.

Under Hartmann and Kilpatrick the acceptance of indoctrination also disappeared from editorials. Unlike Counts, Kilpatrick had consistently rejected indoctrination as a legitimate instrument of education. In 1933 he had written in The Educational Frontier (parts of which read like a rejoinder to Dare the School): "History has convinced the modern-minded that doctrines themselves have their life histories of birth, acceptance, and decay. With this conception of continued change and becoming, propaganda and indoctrination do not fit."[28]

With the Social Frontier thus moving away from doctrinaire radicalism, and the Nation and the New Republic still seeking to maintain the united front with the Communists, by 1938 the journals seemed to have switched sides from their 1935 positions. Actually, the Nation and the New Republic had not perceptibly modified their educational policies; the Social Frontier had moved back to a more moderate position. Thus when another dispute arose the Nation now appeared to be to the left of the Social Frontier.

James Wechsler, of the Nation's staff, precipitated the next debate. In 1938 he wrote for that journal a famous exposé entitled "Twilight at Teachers College." He looked back to the heady days of 1934 when the "insurgent voices" of Counts, Watson, Rugg, and others were integrating their "educational theories with fresh insights into capitalist disorder." (Wechsler incorrectly gave 1934 as the date of Counts' Dare the School). But according to Wechsler, since that time the College had been on the downgrade. "Internal autocracy and pandering to external conservative interests" had forced the faculty back into line. The college had seen "a pronounced decline in progressive activity, perhaps best exhibited in the doldrums which affect the Social Frontier, and important defections from the teachers' union."[29] Wechsler's vigorous attack did not go unanswered. A group of Teachers College professors, including Counts, Childs, Rugg, Curti, and others sent a letter which claimed that the article identified "one of the oldest liberal journals of the country with the political sectarianism which has given pattern to the article." They declared that the article was "full of insinuation and misrepresentation. Taken as a whole it is profoundly false and misleading. We see in it the hand of a political sect in American life which operates on the principle that it will destroy whatever it cannot rule."

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[28] Kilpatrick, "The New Adult Education," in The Educational Frontier, 146-7.

The editors were stung by this attack, and came to Wechsler's defense. They said, quite rightly, that Wechsler was "in no way identified with any political sect" (he had left the Young Communist League before joining the Nation) and declared that the professors had failed to challenge Wechsler's facts.[30] But this was not the end of the dispute. Two months later the *Social Frontier* carried a detailed six page refutation of Wechsler's article. This rebuttal, entitled "Whose Twilight?" was written by George Counts, and ended with a ringing denunciation of those leftists who "appear to operate on the principle that they will destroy by any means at hand whatever they cannot rule."[31]

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[29] Wechsler, "Twilight at Teachers College," Nation, 147 (12/17/38), 661-3.

Our purpose here is not to trace all the ins and outs of these disputes, but to illuminate the relationships between the liberal journals and the "Frontier group" which was so active at Teachers College during the 1930's. In summary, events seem to have proceeded as follows: at first, in 1932 the *New Republic* gave a hearing to George Counts in his challenge to progressive educators to adopt educational indoctrination as a means of promoting a collectivist social order; while taking no position on his proposal themselves, the editors did print rebuttals and counter-rebuttals on the issue. Three years later the Nation opposed indoctrination, while the Social Frontier continued to defend it. Up to this point it seems safe to say that the "Frontiersmen" were more educationally radical than the liberal journals. Then, at the height of the popular front period, the liberal weeklies and the Social Frontier took similar positions concerning the Teachers Union and youth "front" organizations. (Indoctrination apparently ceased to be an item of discussion.) Finally, near the end of the decade, the two groups in effect exchanged sides and the Nation, assuming a more radical position, accused the Teachers College group of timidity and conservatism. After the break-up of the Popular Front, of course, the liberal journalists and the Frontier group became practically indistinguishable in their educational and political policies.

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[30] Letter from Counts, Childs, and others, *Nation*, 147 (12/24/38), 703. The editors' defense of Wechsler appears on the same page. Iversen incorrectly holds that Wechsler's attack on Teachers College was of Communist origin. (p. 200) While the Communists in the Teachers Union doubtless applaude the attack, Wechsler was no longer a Communist. He was, however, trying to maintain the united front. Cf. Wechsler's autobiography, *The Age of Suspicion*, concerning his break with the Communists and his support for the united front. (pp. 129-132).

[31] Counts, "Whose Twilight?" *Social Frontier*, 5 (February, 1939), 135-140. Cf. *A History of Teachers College*, by Lawrence Cremin, David Shannon, and Mary Townsend (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 174-5 for background on this exchange.

On November 8, 1939, three months after the Nazi-Soviet pact, the New Republic produced its twenty-fifth anniversary issue. The fact that William H. Kilpatrick wrote the article on education for this number may be taken as a convenient symbol for the reconciliation of the journals and the Frontier group. Kilpatrick's article, "The Promise of Education," specifically rejected the educational patterns of "Germany, Italy, and Russia, with their teaching of totalitarian ideas." The author insisted that the schools should teach the young to analyze controversial issues, but that they should avoid the imposition of ideas:

> If, then, we believe in democracy we shall avoid indoctrination. The rural individualism of the nineteenth century hardly fits into our industrial twentieth century. Democracy too must undergo continual review and perhaps revision. There is no other safe rule. Democracy, to be itself, cannot indoctrinate even itself.[32]

V

The above discussion of the relationships of the *New Republic* and the *Nation* to the student movement and to the Frontier group of educators should help to round out somewhat the general picture of liberal journalism and education during the 1930's. It should also make clear that all of these issues, from financial questions of federal aid to ideological disputes over indoctrination, were deeply inter-related. One could, of course, go still farther afield and broaden the discussion to include other educational issues of the period. One could note, for example, that although the journals did not entirely abandon their interest in the internal workings of the progressive schools, they did cease to give them the enthusiastic attention which they had lavished on them in the 1920's.[33]

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[32] Kilpatrick, "The Promise of Education," *New Republic*, 101 (11/8/39 - Part II), 57.

[33] For journal treatment of progressive education during the decade, cf. the following: Bertrand Russell, "Free Speech in Childhood," *Nation*, 133 (7/1/31), 12-13; "In the Driftway," by The Drifter, *Nation*, 133 (12/23/31), 698-9; also the reviews of W. B. Curry's *Education in a Changing World*: Louis J. Halle, *Nation*, 140 (6/12/35), 692-3; Evelyn Dewey, *New Republic*, 84 (10/30/35), 341. Curry was headmaster of Dartington Hall, the English school founded by Mr. and Mrs. Leanord Elmhirst. Mrs. Elmhirst was the widow of Willard Straight, and was still subsidizing the *New Republic*.

One could consider the journalists' interest in the educational and cultural potential of new mass media like radio.[34] But none of this would change the essential picture in any substantial way. One would still be left with the central elements which have been outlined above. On the side of continuity, we have the liberal journals still looking to the schools to turn out individuals who could contribute to the building of a better society, still hoping that educational institutions might become centers of creativity and innovation. But even in this there was a change in tone, if not of essential content. During the preceding decades the journals, like Dewey, had generally relied on biological, evolutionary metaphors in describing the role of the school. Now, in addition to talking of education in terms of growth, liberals could write of it in more explosive, violent terms. The editors of the Nation, for example, declared in 1938 that "education is the only safe dynamite that history has revealed for blasting away the obstructions of the past, the only sure method of consolidating for the future the gains that may be made in any period."[35]

There is continuity also in the willingness of liberal journalists like Bliven, Kirchwey, Lovett, and Alvin Johnson to become directly involved in the activities of the new student organizations. In the 1920's journalists had been eager to give their time and talents to the new worker schools; now a few of them, at least, made a similar contribution to the student movement by serving on advisory boards and by blessing the students' journalistic and polemical endeavors.

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[34] Cf. Editorial, "On the Air," Nation, 132 (2/11/31), 146; Editorial, "The Radio and Education," New Republic, 63 (8/13/30), 357-8; Editorial, "Who Owns the Air?" Nation, 139 (8/22/34), 201.

[35] Editorial, "Three R's Beleaguered," Nation, 147, (7/9/38), 33.

But more impressive, perhaps, are the contrasts between the journals' educational positions of the 1930's and those of the earlier periods. The shattering impact of the Depression had weakened the journalists faith in the American economy and had given a new and sometimes strident class-consciousness to much of their writing. The editors were less willing to seek areas of compromise between entrenched conservative groups and deprived minorities. They were more interested in marshaling the combined power of the various depressed elements of the population - including students and teachers - and in building these into an effective political and economic force.

This change of emphasis had obvious effects on the educational material carried by the journals. It encouraged the shift from concern with the internal, curricular problems of education and directed attention toward external, political matters. It led to a de-emphasis on what teachers and students did in the classroom, and to detailed analysis of their activities in the union hall, at conventions, and on the picket line. It came, in short, to a politicizing of the educational discussion in the journals. During the 1920's, Croly in particular had emphasized the necessity of permeating political and social institutions with educational goals and processes. Now, in the 1930's, the pattern tended to be reversed. The journals countenanced the politicizing of teacher and student organizations and even, for a time, the subordination of their educational goals to the needs of the united front with the Communists.

What really seems to have been at work here was a temporary shift away from the Deweyan educational mainstream on which the New Republic had navigated since 1914 and the Nation since about 1918. Dewey had consistently maintained that while education was partially an instrument of social goals, it was also a shaper of such goals. That is, educational institutions should go beyond their roles as tools of broader community interests, and help in the formation of general social objectives. But for a time in the middle and late 1930's, the liberal journals seemed to de-emphasize this fundamental function of education.[36] In their effort to build and maintain a political alliance on the left they permitted the use of teacher and student organizations for primarily political ends.

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[36] Dewey resigned from the New Republic's board of contributing editors in 1937. (His name last appeared on the masthead in the issue of May 12, 1937; v. 91, p. 6). It is not known whether he resigned because of disagreement with the journal's popular front policies. However, he did remain on the board of Common Sense, which was not a united front journal.

This was, however, a rather temporary aberration. The Hitler-Stalin pact exposed the dangers of the popular front policy, and the ensuing war and its accompanying prosperity revealed a viability and strength in the American economy which was surprising to American liberals. When America entered the war against Fascism and Nazism, liberals found themselves at long last "at peace" with their fellow countrymen.[37] The Nation and the New Republic then found it as natural as gravity to move back into the pragmatic, democratic, Deweyan educational tradition to which they had adhered for so many years.

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[37] This ironic concept comes from the title of one of Donald Fleming's lectures in American Intellectual History at Harvard: "World War II: The Intellectuals at Peace."

PART V: CONCLUSION

Chapter Sixteen: The Schools from the Outside[1]

This study opened with the year 1914 - at the high noon of the Progressive Era, and ended with America's entry into World War Two. The twenty-seven years surveyed included a major war, a decade of Republican dominance, the Depression and New Deal, and finally the outbreak of a new and more disastrous world conflict. These were obviously momentous years for the world and for the United States; they were no less eventful for the liberals and educators with whom we have been concerned.

Our purpose in this final chapter is to analyze briefly some of the long-range trends, the recurrent issues, the fundamental comparisons and contrasts which arise out of this study. Each of the previous sections has closed with a summary of movements within the period covered. At this point it will be useful to shift to the next level of generality and attempt some more inclusive assessments. In this section we shall first review briefly the major topics considered in the three preceding sections, and then summarize the major findings of the research, with some attention to interrelationships among the various conclusions. We shall close with an assessment of the significance of some of the conclusions reached.

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[1] This was the title of a New Republic editorial: 1 (1/30/15), 10-11.

I

It is appropriate to begin with a brief survey of the topics which have been considered in the preceding sections. The study opened with an analysis of the general relationships existing between American journalism - particularly the liberal variety - and educational developments. It surveyed for the 1914-1921 period the two chief branches of American liberalism and their divergent educational expressions. Then it analyzed three educational themes which were of particular significance to the liberal journals at that time: the efficiency movement in the schools, academic freedom, and education as an instrument of reform.

For the 1921-30 period attention was given to the changed political climate and the consequent liberal response; to the worker education movement; to the child-centered school and its anti-intellectual overtones; and finally, to the role assumed by the Nation and the New Republic in defending education against attacks from various sources.

The 1931-41 decade required the analysis of still other topics: the leftward shift of American liberalism; the effects of the Depression on education; the growth of teacher unions and a militant student movement, both with serious problems of Communist factionalism; and finally, the relation of the liberal journals to the "educational frontiersmen" of Teachers College.

Probably the most important finding of the entire study is that which provides the theme for the 1914-1921 period: that progressive education was not simply "the educational phase of American progressivism writ large."[2] It was, instead, an expression of but one branch of progressivism. The two major strands of American progressivism, at least as represented by their leading journalistic voices - the *Nation* and the *New Republic* - had quite significant differences of content and emphasis in their educational views.

The older, more classical Wilsonian liberalism of the pre-1918 *Nation*, although favorable to some educational reforms, was quite out of sympathy with Deweyan progressive education. The *Nation* continually reminded its readers of the values to be found in traditional subject matter and pedagogy and warned against the pragmatic and utilitarian dangers which it saw in the "new education." The *New Republic* group, on the other hand, which included some of the most vigorous and thoughtful proponents of Roosevelt's New Nationalism, was in nearly complete accord with the reformist strand of progressive education. Croly, Weyl, Lippmann, and Bourne sought - like Dewey - to make society more education-oriented and education more socially-directed. This divergence was, of course, a partial expression of two quite different philosophical positions. The members of the New Republic group were largely philsophical monists and pragmatists. They tried to reconcile such dualisms as the ideal and the real, and the mind and the body, and they subjected educational and other values to the experimental test of social utility. Harold Fuller and other pre-1918 editors tended to be, on the other hand, dualists and idealists. They were more inclined to keep separate such dualisms as thought and action, and they sought to maintain "standards" in education as in other areas of life. Consequently they were less concerned about the possible irrelevance of such standards, and of the curriculum generally, in the lives of school children. Thus the New Republic, in its educational views, promoted the fusion and interpenetration of society, culture, work, and education, while the Nation emphasized the specific value of each of these aspects of life and attempted to keep them as separate as possible.

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[2] Cremin, *Transformation*, viii.

The fact that the Nation's 1918 shift to the new, more activist, centralist liberalism was accompanied by an increased sympathy for progressive education provides, of course, additional evidence for the above finding. But it should be noted that adherence to the "new liberalism" did not automatically connote support for all branches of educational progressivism. Croly's liberalism - which had a strong esthetic and cultural element - was somewhat more acceptant of the child-centered school of the 1920's than was Villard's primarily political liberalism.

Another conclusion of considerable importance is that American liberals, as represented by the post-1918 Nation and the New Republic, were consistent supporters of a reformist role forreducation. This position was evident in a number of areas over the years and showed itself both in the trends the journals opposed and in those they supported. Both journals, for example, resisted the efficiency movement in the schools when it seemed to be tied to conservative and business-oriented goals, but were willing to use efficiency measures as tools of democracy and social progress. Both resisted the sharp separation of liberal and vocational studies, fearing that this would rigidify class lines and retard social mobility. Each journal supported workers' education as a means both of promoting the reform of the labor movement and of making the unions an instrument of broader reform.

This desire to make the school an instrument of social change naturally led the Nation and the New Republic to promote what they conceived of as a reformist curriculum. Bourne, Dewey, Croly, Villard, and others encouraged schools to make thorough and critical studies of social trends so that graduates would be able to participate in needed economic and political modifications. The journals thus recommended that workers' schools go beyond technical subjects of short-term value and study politics, economics, and other social sciences. For the same reason Villard in the early 1930's encouraged colleges to help their students analyze the causes of the economic disaster which had befallen the country. And, as we have seen, even the most avid proponents of the child-centered school felt it necessary to claim that their graduates would be productive agents of reform.

This promotion of a reformist curriculum was not without its dangers, of course. It could easily have led the journalists - as it did George Counts - to propose the imposition on students of particular value systems and social goals. But the Nation and the New Republic were remarkably consistent on this issue, and avoided the advocacy of indoctrination even at their most radical stage in the 1930's. Perhaps because of their experience in defending the schools against conservative indoctrination, the journals never succumbed to the temptation to promote liberal counter-imposition.

Educational reformism was, then, one of the areas of deepest consistency between the journals and across the three decades included in this study. Closely related to this was a commitment to democratic procedures in education. This was but one expression of the journals' call for greater democracy in industry, politics, and society generally. The journalists deeply believed that individuals should have maximum control over their own lives and actions, and this was as true of students and teachers as it was of workers and citizens. Thus the journalists sought to liberalize and de-formalize school curricula, and to give students more leeway to explore their own interests. This same democratic impulse partially explains their encouragement of those student organizations which during the 1930's were agitating over their own grievances as well as those of the larger society.

But this push for democracy in education was most marked in regard to teachers and professors. Harold Laski, Villard, and Croly all called for greater representation of instructors in the government of American colleges. From its founding in 1914 the New Republic was a consistent and vigorous advocate of organizations of educators, and after 1918 it was joined in this conviction by the Nation. This belief expressed itself in encouragement for the American Association of University Professors and in occasional words of sympathy for the National Education Association, but most often in active and forceful support for the American Federation of Teachers. Even when the journals acquiesced in the Communist domination of the A.F.T., they did so in the name of democracy. Their own commitment to democratic practices was so strong that they apparently had difficulty perceiving that a union faction could be using democratic processes for anti-democratic ends.

This belief in economic democracy, union democracy, and educational democracy was, of course, part of a larger pattern of social values in which power gradually substituted for persuasion. Fuller's Nation, and even Croly for a time, hoped that necessary social change might come to pass through the ethical actions of business and political leaders. On the basis of such a theory, the role of journalists was to persuade such leaders to institute reforms. But Croly moved away from this emphasis soon after the New Republic was launched, and when Villard took over the Nation he drastically modified that journal's position on this issue. From that point on both journals devoted more attention to encouraging depressed groups - including educators - to organize and to apply political and economic pressure in their search for justice.

A conclusion which is at least suggested, if not demonstrated, by much of the preceding material is that educational policy varied less on the journals than policy in other areas. The journals never strayed far from the view that man was at least partially rational, that his degree of rationality could be increased, that it could be turned to reformist ends, and that education, broadly construed, was the instrument of that purpose. The journals never devoted a special section to education as they did to politics, foreign affairs, books, or the atts. The reason may be, of course, that education, as a separate subject, was not considered as important to the intellectual readership of the weeklies as some of the other fields. But part of the reason also may be that agreement on educational matters was so fundamental that it required relatively little debate. Probably the liberal consensus on education is more fundamental than that in almost any other area.[3]

One could, in fact, construct a rough chart of developing journal opinion which would show startling changes of policy on war, on international organizations, on Russia, on literature, and on other topics. But on such a chart, the pattern for education would show much smaller fluctuations. Throughout the period covered by this study (again excepting Fuller's Nation) the journals have - with relatively minor variations - supported democratic, anti-formalistic, reformist, progressive education.

What did vary, however, more than the actual content of educational policy, was the intensity of faith placed in education. A theorem which oversimplifies a rather complicated picture would be: dependence by liberals on education varies inversely with political success. For example, as long as the New Republic group enjoyed a relationship with power, as represented by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, they had considerable hope that politics would be the chief avenue to reform. Then, during the 1920's, when liberals were alienated from dominant political forces in American society, they placed increased hope in education as an instrument of progress and social betterment. (This should not be read to mean that the quantity of educational comment in the journals necessarily increased during this period, although it may have. It is intended only to indicate that decreased hope of political success seemed to be accompanied by increased dependence on educational means). Finally, during the 1930's, when the New Deal - in spite of carping from the Nation and the New Republic - was enacting much of the liberal program, progress seemed possible without waiting for the slow processes of education. Thus the liberal weeklies during the 1930's put more faith in immediate political action and relied less completely on educational processes. As part of this process, the journals also gave more attention to the political and organizational activities of students and teachers than to the questions of educational goals and curriculum which had occupied them during the 1920's.

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[3] Cf. Rush Welter, Popular Education, especially pp. 1-6 on the larger American consensus on education.

II

Another finding of this study has been that many of the liberal journalists took a fairly active personal role in educational matters. The preceding sections have indicated that the editors and writers for the Nation and the New Republic continually expressed through these journals a deep and thoughtful interest in educational developments. From time to time we have indicated also that some of the people included in this study took a more direct role in education -

through teaching, founding educational institutions, serving on committees and boards of trustees, and writing for the educational press. It will be useful here to summarize some of these activities and to draw appropriate conclusions from them.

It is important to note again that the term "liberal journalists" includes people who were involved in the work of the weeklies to quite varying degrees - ranging from the nearly total commitment of editors like Croly, Bliven, Villard, and Kirchwey to the temporary and part-time contribution of men like Dewey and R. M. Lovett.[4] Many of the contributing editors were, of course, college professors, so were unavoidably immersed in the activities of higher education. But numbers of them also had a strong interest in elementary and secondary education as well.

Recognizing, then, that "liberal journalists" can have no standard meaning, we may return to the question of the variety and intensity of educational participation by the subjects of this study. Probably the most significant and effective single example of such participation was the founding of the New School for Social Research. As was noted in Chapter Two, a number of persons associated with the journals - notably Croly, Johnson, and Dorothy Straight - were instrumental in establishing the school. The New School can be looked on, in fact, as the institutional expression of the same reformist and socially educative intentions which found their journalistic outlet through the New Republic.

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[4] Cf. p. 62n, above.

The New School can also be seen, of course, as just one outgrowth of the whole interest in adult and workers' education which the journalists shared. And in this area a number of the journalists, including Croly, Soule, Johnson, and Carl Van Doren, participated as sponsors, administrators, or instructors. Eduard Lindeman, a New Republic contributing editor, was one of the early leaders of the American Association for Adult Education.

Some of the journalists participated in more conventional educational activities as well. Oswald Villard was for a time president of the school board in his home town of Dobbs Ferry, N. Y. His interest in Negro education was shown in his service on the board of directors of the Manassas Industrial School and his work on behalf of Tuskegee Institute.[5] John T. Flynn, a New Republic contributing editor, was a member of the New York City Board of Higher Education.

But probably progressive education, in its variety of forms, attracted more direct participation from these men than any other educational effort. The 1931-32 list of officers of the Progressive Education Association included, for example, the New Republic contributing editor John Dewey as honorary president, and editor Bruce Bliven and contributing editors Alvin Johnson and Eduard Lindeman as Advisory Board members. William H. Kilpatrick, Francis Froelicher, and Carleton Washburne - all of whom sometimes wrote for the New Republic - were listed as honorary vice presidents. Bruce Bliven also served on the Commission which carried out the P.E.A.'s famous Eight Year Study of progressive school graduates. And, as one might expect, the journalists sometimes wrote for the progressive educational press as well as for their own weeklies. Bliven and Flynn, for example, contributed articles to the Social Frontier and Robert M. Lovett to Progressive Education.[6]

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[5] Wreszin, p. 33; also Flint Kellogg, "Villard and the NAACP," Nation, 188 (2/14/59), 137-140.

Similar activity for other liberal journalists could be cited, but the point has been made; there was considerable cross-fertilization between the fields of education and liberal journalism. Educators like de Lima and Caroline Pratt used the journals for communication with a liberal audience; journalists like Bliven and Villard took an active personal interest in various educational enterprises; and professors like Lovett and Rexford Tugwell became contributing editors of the journals and spoke through them on education and on other subjects. One could hardly prove that association with the liberal journals created an interest in educational matters; more likely the same reformist impulse underlay both the journalistic and educational work of the people considered above.

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[6] Progressive Education, 9 (January, 1932), inside front cover; Cremin, Transformation, pp. 232,252.

It is, of course, possible that the phenomenon described above is true of the personnel of most periodicals. Perhaps journalists in general tend to find education a field of particular interest. Or possibly this is characteristic only of intellectual periodicals, regardless of their political slant. Only a fairly comprehensive comparative study could settle this question, but it seems safe to assert that the particular interests of the liberal journalists - in adult education, workers' schools, teacher unions, student organizations, and progressive education - would not be duplicated among other groups of journalists. This special cluster of educational concerns would be most unlikely to arise out of any group not sharing the reformist, "new liberal," activist orientation of the personnel associated with the *Nation* and the *New Republic*.

III

We have seen that during a period of twenty-seven years the *Nation* and the *New Republic* commented extensively and thoughtfully on educational developments. They analyzed educational reality, tried to identify trends, and proposed various policies. We have seen also that some journal personnel took a more active role and participated directly in certain educational organizations and activities. Our final question must be: what was the significance of all this? Did the liberal journalists have any measurable impact on American education or any segment of it?

When the question is stated thus, our answer must be negative. One cannot measure in any precise way the effects of the words and actions of these men and women. One cannot re-run history without them to see if it comes out any differently. As Penn Kimball has recently written: "One has to be wary when writing about so-called molders of public opinion."[7] But if one cannot find absolutely solid evidence, one can at least point out circumstances in which the journalists seemed to have an effect, or in which people thought they were being influenced by the educational material in the weeklies. We can cite Bourne's impact on A. W. Dunn; we can note that Counts' articles provoked responses from de Lima, Alpert, and others; we can remember the vigorous reaction created by Wechsler's "Twilight at Teachers College"; we can remind ourselves of the steady flow of letters inspired by the A.F.T. controversy, by Dewey's numerous articles, and by Kilpatrick's educational statements; we may remember also the voluminous correspondence occasioned by journal articles on academic freedom. In all of these cases and others that might be mentioned, the journals seemed to be "getting through" to their readers. They were apparently provoking thought on the part of teachers and others concerning a wide variety of educational issues. If one cannot trace ideas directly from the pages of the journals into men's minds and then into visible social change, one can at least state that the weeklies were justified in making the New Republic's claim: "As a journal of ideas we may contribute something to the formulation of the tendencies and forces which do end in action." Theodore Peterson has written: "New ideas are essential if society is not to stagnate. The minority magazine is an especially suitable vehicle for introducing them, weighing them pro and con and, if they have merit, feeding them into the mainstream of thought."[8] It is this role as creator, transmitter, and evaluator of new ideas - in education as in other fields - that gives the liberal journals some significance in American education.

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[7] Penn Kimball "Modesty Was Not a Family Affliction," New York Times Book Review (2/27/66), 7/

This takes a rather broad view of the utility of the journals to education. But if one looks at the Nation and the New Republic from the position of the educator, their value lies largely in the perspective which they can provide. Educators receive comment and criticism on their work from a great variety of periodical sources, of which three may be mentioned here. (1) Professional journals, written by and for educators, provide a quantity of often technical facts and ideas, and give essentially an "inside" view of educational developments. (2) Mass magazines, generally moderate or conservative in politics, provide an "outside," non-professional, non-technical commentary on education. This commentary may be given in a broader social context than that found in the professional literature, but it often reflects a disinclination to modify the status quo in any significant way. Mass magazines are limited in their role as analysts of education because they are usually only the mildest of general social critics. While able and willing to castigate educators for their narrowness and for some of their more obvious excesses, they are often unable or unwilling to call attention to educational problems which are the expression of larger social ills. (3) Liberal journals, however, are outside both the world of the professional educators and of the political consensus represented by most popular magazines. This gives them a perspective unavailable to either the professional or the popular press.

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[8] Editorial, "How Shall We Vote?" New Republic, 72 (8/17/32), 4; Theodore Peterson, "The Role of the Minority Magazine," Antioch Review, 23 (Spring, 1963), 58.

During the 1914-1941 period, the Nation and the New Republic, as the foremost liberal journals, played a useful role in American education. They transmitted ideas and information between educators and political liberals, and at the same time criticized many of the ideas which were being transmitted. Had the journals served only as a pipeline for facts and theories they would have been exceedingly useful in building political support for educational innovation and in keeping educators aware of the social context of their work.[9] But they went well beyond this "pipeline" role; they continually analyzed and evaluated the educational ideas and policies which came under their scrutiny.

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[9] Cf. Cremin, p. 357 and passim regarding journalism, lay opinion, and education.

Those readers of the journals who were not directly involved in educational matters were thus kept informed of developments in the field; thus political reformers were constantly reminded that education could not be ignored in their plans for social reconstruction. Equally important, educators were constantly helped to see their work in a broader context; those who proposed a reformist role for education could, with the help of the liberal journals, see more clearly both the possibilities and the limitations of the schools as instruments of creative change. The journals provided a continual corrective to the easy, simplistic doctrine of some educators that education was _the_ key to social progress and reform.

It is abundantly clear that the liberal journals had only limited success in this role as conveyors and critics of educational information and ideas. Because of their small circulations, many who might have profited from the educational material in the journals were not reached.

But educators welcomed the liberal journals as allies in the struggle for academic freedom; progressives appreciated the support which the _New Republic_ and the post-1918 _Nation_ gave to educational innovation. However, as has been shown above, the journals were quite as willing to criticize as to praise developments in education. In a 1915 article, "The Schools from the Outside," the editors of the New Republic gave clear expression to the position on which this study is based. They claimed that educators, with their emphasis on "constructive criticism," effectively screened from view any really fundamental critiques of their policies or programs:

> Educators, it is true, 'welcome fair criticism,' and they have a fond belief that they get it from one another in the educational press. But in this mass of books and journals . . . the whole setting, language, philosophy are professional. The very bases and premises which the lay critic wishes to criticize are taken for granted.[10]

The editors' point was that educators, like businessmen, union leaders, government officials, or members of any other group, were inevitably limited in their ability to criticize themselves. They had great difficulty in getting beyond their own assumptions and premises. What was needed - and this was a role which the liberal journals attempted to fulfill - was someone who could criticize the schools "from the outside." That these journals were able to do so with insight and perception may be partly ascribed to the fact that they were to a degree alienated from mass society as well as outside of the schools.[11]

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[10] Editorial, New Republic, 1 (1/30/15), 10-11.

[11] On the need for educational criticism, see: Paul Woodring, "The Role of Responsible Criticism in Educational Reform," The Education Digest, 31 (December, 1965), 1-4; Mortimer Smith, "Educators Must Listen Closely," Phi Delta Kappan, 47 (February, 1966), 295-7; Grace and Fred Hechinger, "In Criticism of Anticriticism," New York Times Magazine (3/11/62), 28, 86.

Walter Lippmann has written that "in a democracy, the opposition is not only tolerated as constitutional, but must be maintained as indispensable." This is as true of opposition, minority, dissident journalism as it is of the strictly political realm. If our major social institutions, the schools and colleges among them, are to avoid rigidity - if they are to retain the plasticity which will enable them to respond to new needs - they will continue to require supporters who are also critics. It is to the credit of the liberal journals that they have served both of these functions for American education during much of this century.

APPENDIX

CIRCULATION FIGURES - 1916-1941

Year	New Republic	Nation
1914	Not listed	
1915	Listed but no figures	9,063
1916	16,060	9,535
1917	29,560	9,763
1918	31,200	8,467
1919	37,000	38,087
1920	35,000	28,960
1921	35,000	30,584
1922	37,000	24,732
1923	No figures given	27,744
1924	30,000	31,251
1925	30,000	30,303
1926	30,000	30,713
1927	25,000	30,188
1928	25,000	38,019
1929	12,000	37,991
1930	25,000	37,127
1931	25,000	35,436
1932	25,000	35,409
1933	25,000	36,092
1934	25,000	35,649
1935	25,000	35,024
1936	25,000	38,147
1937	26,948	42,046
1938	27,140	37,904
1939	27,809	34,625
1940	31,120	37,005
1941	28,781	33,169

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[*] To keep the bibliography consistent with the text, volume numbers are given in arabic numerals and dates are given in abbreviated form.

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